THE GREAT SCHOLARS OF THE DEOBAND ISLAMIC SEMINARY

JUSTICE MUFTĪ
MUHAMMAD TAQI USMANI

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

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Cover image is of a turban presented to Yahya Batha's late father Moulana Muhammed ibn Ahmed Batha at the 100th anniversary of Darul Uloom Deoband. May Allah have mercy on him, illuminate his resting place and elevate his status in Jannah. *Amin.*

For Muftī Muḥammad Shafī

May Allah illuminate his resting place

and elevate his status in jannah, Amin.

Contents

Publisher's Forward

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH the most Merciful and peace and blessings on His chosen one, the beloved of Allah and his companions and all those who follow him till the Day of Judgement.

Turath is honoured to present to its readers a translation of Shaykh al-Islām, Justice Muftī Muhammad Taqī Usmani's (may Allah preserve him) Urdu work *Akābir-i Deoband Kyā Thay*. This work translated into english as *The Great Scholars of the Deoband Islamic Seminary*. The respected author, arguably one of the greatest living scholars, penned this work in 1994 CE. This work is a beneficial and spiritually motivating collection of illustrative incidents from the lives of some of the greatest Indian-Subcontinent Scholars of the recent past. Turath Publishing would like to thank the author, Muftī Taqi Usmani for granting us permission to translate this valuable work.

In the first section of the book, the author cites some exemplary incidents which he heard directly from his late father, the Grand Muftī of Pakistan Shaykh Mawlānā Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' ﷺ, with reference to his teachers and mentors. The second

section examines some distinctive praiseworthy traits of the great scholars of Deoband.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Professor Abdul Rahim Qidawi for the initial translation from Urdu into English, thereafter I would like to thank brother Andrew Bosso for editing the initial translation and Sidi Ibrahim Morrison for his thorough editing of the translation, and it is his valuable input that has brought the present work to the fore, not forgetting Mawlānā Saleem Seedat (Blackburn) for annotating the text and making this publication a more comprehensive read.

I pray that Allah accept this from us all. *Amin*.

YAHYA BATHA

Preface

In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon the noble Messenger Muhammad. The conduct of our right acting predecessors represents living Islamic values. Therefore, their stories are of great benefit in training the impulses of the lower self. They also reflect the spirit and temperament passed down through successive generations from the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). As a result, if one were to compare the effectiveness of a long motivational speech with that of a short illustration from the life of one of these *awliyā*, the latter will often prove to be much more potent in its persuasive impact. For this reason writers throughout history have compiled collections of the most noteworthy biographical details from the lives of the *awliyā*.

The scholars of Deoband were blessed with the exemplary characteristics of the Companions and Successors; not only in their speech and writings, but also in their deeds and behaviour. This fact becomes all the more significant when it is considered that the example set by these scholars arises from the recent, rather than the more distant, past. By Allah's grace, biographies of the

majority of these scholars have been published, however, various incidents involving them do not necessarily feature in these works. Allah had granted my father, Mawlānā Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', the privilege of being allowed to benefit directly from the scholars of Deoband for around fifty years, and therefore he was also able to acquire and reflect the exemplary traits of these men. At times, he recounted, both at home and elsewhere, incidents related to his teachers and mentors that I often felt needed to be recorded in writing.

This desire of mine was partly fulfilled when the editor of the journal *ar-Rashīd* (Sahiwal, Pakistan) asked me to produce something on Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband for a special issue. Owing to my many commitments, it was not possible for me to write an academic paper. However, I produced a compilation of events related to the lives of the scholars of Deoband. The article appeared under the title "*Akābir-i Deoband Kya Thay*" (Urdu) in the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband edition of *ar-Rashīd*. Subsequently, on the occasion of the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband's centenary celebrations, it was included in a series of introductory booklets.This was during the lifetime of my esteemed father.

I had written the piece in haste, merely assembling a collection of illustrative incidents, with a view to compiling these properly at a later stage. I had also planned to ask my father's assistance in sourcing a greater quantity of reports, as many of them had escaped my attention at the time. However, as a result of unnecessary delays, this unique opportunity was missed, since in the meantime my father passed away and his contribution was irreplaceable.

After my father's death, an extensive special issue of *al-Balāgh* magazine entitled "*Muftī-i A'zam*" was published under my editorship, and carried an article written by me entitled "*Ḥaḍrat ke Shuyūkh-o-Akābir*" (Urdu) in which I included those of my father's

reports about his teachers and mentors that I could remember, in the hope of preserving them.

Both of these articles are included in this book on the strength of their common theme. However, as they were written separately, there is an inevitable degree of overlap between them, which it is hoped will enhance, rather than detract from, the usefulness of the end product.[1] It should also be noted that the later article, "*Ḥaḍrat ke Shuyūkh-o-Akābir*", appears first in this book, as it is more extensive than the earlier one, "*Akābir-i Deoband Kya Thay*".

My ability to render this service is entirely from Allah, therefore I pray that He renders this work beneficial, and that He may inspire us all to follow in the footsteps of these noble *awliyā*. *Amīn.*

Muhammad Taqī ʿUsmānī
Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi Number 14
26 Rabīʿ I, 1415 AH (1994 CE)

1 Please note the aforementioned repetition has generally been avoided in this translation.

The Teachers and Mentors of Mawlānā Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'

ALL PRAISE BE TO ALLAH Who suffices. May peace be upon His chosen servants. Mawlānā Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', had to his credit many scholarly accomplishments and distinctive qualities. In reality, he owed all these distinctions to the devotion that he had for his elders and to their constant guidance. Thus his illustrious life was a testimony to the excellence of his mentors.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' always spoke about his teachers and mentors with conspicuous love and respect, and it is clear that the warmth and sincerity of these sentiments were reciprocated. However occupied he may have been, he was never too busy to devote valuable time to talking about them at length, and while any of these elders were still alive, his preferred free time activity was to visit them in order to benefit from their company. After their deaths, he would enthusiastically recount inspiring incidents from their lives that reinforced the certainty of belief in his audience. For this reason, a number of brief accounts describing his mentors have been included within the text.

He gained benefit from many *'ulamā'* and *awliyā*. However, the

main focus of the book is confined to the select few with whom he enjoyed particularly significant relationships. Furthermore, priority is given to presenting the outstanding character traits of these men of knowledge and to recording those events that throw light on the uniqueness of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s relationship to them, rather than the pursuit of formal biographical detail as an end in itself. Hence, it is hoped that the following accounts will prove to be both informative from a historical point of view and inspirational as an intimate survey of human capacity for spiritual greatness.

Shaykh al-Hind
Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan

THE SPECIAL STANDING of Shaykh al-Hind Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan[2] places him at the forefront of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'i's mentors. In his travelogue of Deoband and Thānā Bhawan, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' describes his particular relationship with Shaykh al-Hind:

I had the privilege of being a student in his day. However, I was

2 Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan—more famously known as Shaykh al-Hind or "the leader of India"—was the first student of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband (established in 1283/1867). He was one of the greatest students and teachers in Deoband's history. Later on he was appointed as the third *Sadr Mudarris* (Dean of Scholars) and *Sarparast* (Patron) of the Dār al-'Ulūm. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, he had received *ijāzah* from Ḥājī 'Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī and then later by Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. Shaykh al-Hind died in 1339/1920, leaving behind the likes of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī, *'Allāmah* Anwār Shāh Kashmīrī, *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī, Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī and Mawlānā 'Ubayd Allāh Sindhī. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulamā' Deoband*, *Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Ki 50 Mithālī Shakhsiyyāt*, *Ḥayāt-i Shaykh al-Hind* by Mawlānā Miān Aṣghar Ḥusain, *Naqsh-i Ḥayāt* by Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī, *Tazkira-i Shaykh al-Hind* by Mawlānā 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān Bijnorī and *Tārīkh-i Shaykh al-Hind* by Mawlānā Sayyid Muḥammad Miān.

> not formally or technically his student, as I was a student of a secondary class at the time. Yet, prompted by my admiration and respect for him, I often attended his lectures on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Also, Allah bestowed on me the privilege of offering *tarāwīḥ* prayer behind him for two years, before his imprisonment in Malta. After his return from Malta, I pledged my *bay'ah* to him during the time when I had become a junior teacher at Dār al-'Ulūm. Upon visiting his grave, I was reminded of his affection and favours upon me.

Although he was not Shaykh al-Hind's student in a formal sense, he used to join his lectures on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* whenever possible. The fact that he was able to recount in detail to his students and followers many of the points covered by Shaykh al-Hind in those lectures indicates that his attendance there was more than a matter of routine. In the evenings when other Dār al-'Ulūm students used to relax, he would continue to take advantage of Shaykh al-Hind's sessions until the *maghrib* prayer.

War had broken out in the Balkans and Tripoli. Therefore, at the Shaykh's behest, long holidays were declared at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband during which the teachers and students started to raise funds in support of these causes. Under the Shaykh's directive, the young Muḥammad Shafī' too collected donations from village to village. It was in relation to this period that he used to recount from the Shaykh's gatherings and lectures. A number of these stories now follow.

The leftover wuḍū' water

It is reported in almost all of the hadith collections that after completing *wuḍū'*, the Prophet ﷺ used to drink the leftover water from the container.[3] It has also been reported that he used

3 Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ṭabarānī's *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and Aḥmad.

to sprinkle some of the water on his *tahband* (lower garment).[4] The*'ulamā'* have offered a variety of interpretations concerning the wisdom of these two practices. However, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' maintained that Shaykh al-Hind's explanation for these was the most insightful one.

According to his view, *wuḍū'* is an action for ensuring the cleanliness and purity of the bodily parts. Yet, while it is important to purify the outward, it is even more important to purify the inward. So, after completing *wuḍū'*, the Prophet ﷺ performed these particular actions, both of which are connected to the matter of inner purity. The connection is that the two body parts involved here, the tongue and the private parts, go to the very foundations of humanity's most negative traits and wrongdoings. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ is recorded as having said:

> He who guarantees that he will protect the following two: that which lies between his jaws (i.e. his tongue) and that which lies between his legs (i.e. his private parts), I will assure him of entry into Paradise.[5]

Hence, the purpose of drinking the water left over from *wuḍū'*, and sprinkling some of it on one's lower garment, is to focus attention on the importance of protecting against these two major sources of human deficiency.

Fasting on the "day of doubt"

If the moon is not sighted on the 29th day of Sha'bān, then the 30th of Sha'bān, according to juristic terminology, is referred to as the "day of doubt" and Ḥanafī jurists, therefore, are of the view that it is *makrūh* (disliked) for the general public to fast on that

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4 Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim.

5 Al-Bukhārī.

day. However, *'ulamā'* may observe a fast on this day with the sole intention of carrying out an act of *nafl* (voluntary act of worship), as they are clear that it is not being done out of prudence or uncertainty in relation to the start of the blessed month of Ramadan.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' related that once, on the day of doubt, Shaykh al-Hind came out having chewed a betel leaf, which would have meant he was not fasting. Therefore, someone from the gathering asked: "*Ḥaḍrat*, today is the day of doubt, but is it not the case that the select few may fast on this day?" At first he replied, "This concession is only for a select few, so how can I be confident of being included?" Then, after a pause, he added: "In fact, I am terrified by the hadith of 'Ammār ibn Yāsir: 'One who fasts on the day of doubt, truly he has disobeyed the father of Qāsim' (i.e. the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him)."[6]

Although Ḥanafī jurists apply this hadith to the common people, they exempt the *'ulamā'* from it. However, a literal reading of the hadith suggests that the ruling is a general one, in which case, he was clearly most reluctant to override its apparent meaning.[7]

'Umar ﷺ and Satan

Someone once asked Shaykh al-Hind about the hadith: "The Prophet ﷺ has said that Satan does not pass the road which is used by 'Umar."[8] Because the same or similar was not said in relation to the Prophet ﷺ or Abū Bakr ﷺ, the question naturally arises as to why Satan should have feared 'Umar ﷺ alone, even though both the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ﷺ enjoyed a higher status than him.

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6 Please note that this hadith of al-Bukhārī is *mawqūf*, a statement of the companion 'Ammār ibn Yāsir. For further details around the status of this hadith, one may refer to Zayla'ī's *Naṣb ar-Rāyah*, in the section of *Kitāb as-Ṣawm*.

7 For further details regarding the juristic debate surrounding the "day of doubt", one may refer to Mawlana Ẓafar Aḥmad 'Usmānī's *I'lā as-Sunan*.

8 Bukhārī and Muslim.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' said that in responding to any kind of critical question, Shaykh al-Hind would usually commence with a pointed, but humourous kind of remark, before providing a more comprehensive reply. Hence, it came as no surprise that in answer to this question, he opened with a quick-witted observation: "It is Satan's own stupidity. I think you had best ask him why he feared 'Umar ﷺ more than the Prophet ﷺ or Abū Bakr ﷺ!"

He then cogently proceeded to offer the following explanation: "Superiority and awe are two different things. A superior person may not necessarily be the most dreaded person. In the case of 'Umar ﷺ the quality of awe was a predominant characteristic, and its presence was what the hearts of the people felt most immediately. On the other hand, in the case of the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ﷺ, the quality of beauty was what predominated in their characters. Given this contrast, the immediate sense of awe when confronted with 'Umar ﷺ is not surprising."

The weighing of deeds on the Day of Judgement

In the final section of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* attention is drawn to the words of Allah Most High: *We will set up the Just Balance on the Day of Rising* [Qur'an: 21:47]. From this the believer is given to understand that on the Day of Judgement the actions of all human beings will be weighed in divinely established scales. The expectation of this event has given rise to a theological debate as to how something that has no material substance (i.e. human actions) may be weighed. The *'ulamā'* have offered various explanations for this; some maintain that the entire record of one's actions will be weighed, whilst others hold that the whole description is metaphorical. There are also those who have argued that the actions themselves will be transformed into tangible forms and then weighed.

Shaykh al-Hind focused on this matter in a lecture he delivered

in Deoband. Therefore, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' used to incorporate the approach of Shaykh al-Hind in a most convincing manner whenever commenting on the conclusion of *al-Bukhārī*. He took the position that there may have been some justification for this debate may in earlier times. However, today it may be more easily resolved, since so many abstract items are routinely weighed and their units of measurement have become common knowledge. For example, temperature is generally ascertained by a thermometer and measured on the Celsius or Fahrenheit scale. Likewise, other invisible entities such as atmospheric pressure and humidity are also easily measured using modern instruments. Since man, with his comparatively limited knowledge, has managed to devise appropriate mechanisms for the measurement of these intangible things, it is difficult to imagine that Allah, being the Creator and Master of the entire universe, would find it in any way a challenge to bring forth a balance for the purpose of weighing man's actions.

Interpretation of the hadith of "Muṣarrāh"

The hadith in question is related to *ash-Shāt al-Muṣarrāh*. The details involved are somewhat technical and, as such, lie outside the scope of what is required for present purposes.[9] However, the core issue is that the Ḥanafī stance appears to be at variance with the thrust of the narration, which requires that a certain measure of dates be returned along with the goat. This directive seems to be inconsistent with the other norms specified in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' often referred to Shaykh al-Hind's remarkable interpretation of this hadith. He held that the Prophet ﷺ was simultaneously both a jurist and a mentor, and that it was in this latter capacity that he used to settle disputes

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9 For further details regarding the Ḥanafī position on the hadith of Muṣarrāh, one may refer to *I'lā as-Sunan*.

amongst the Muslims. Therefore, what seems to be a ruling in favour of returning a measure of dates is not as such, legally binding, as the decision under these circumstances becomes a matter of recommendation and reconciliation.

A principle of hadith interpretation

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' narrated another golden principle of hadith interpretation which he had learnt from Shaykh al-Hind, and which has frequently come to the assistance of the present author in resolving numerous issues, particularly in relation to actions performed by the Prophet ﷺ. These actions fall into two categories: Firstly, his normative practice and instructions; and secondly, unusual or occasional actions that he did not routinely perform himself and which he did not expect others to perform regularly. In practice, each category must be treated appropriately; actions falling into the first category belong to the Sunnah and are to be followed normatively. However, as for actions belonging to the second category, these may occasionally be performed, but should not be treated as obligations to be carried out on a normative basis.

Shaykh al-Hind cited the following example in order to illustrate this principle. It is part of the Sunnah to recite *rabbanā laka 'l-ḥamd* ("O our Lord, all praise is for You") while rising from *rukū'*. However, it is reported in one hadith that the Prophet ﷺ was leading the prayer and when he recited *sami'a Allah li man ḥamidah* ("Allah has heard and for Him is all praise"), a Companion said in a loud voice, "*rabbanā laka al-ḥamd, ḥamdan kathīran ṭayyiban mubārakan fīhi mubārakan kama yuḥibbu rabbunā wa yarḍā* (O our Lord, all praise is for You, a plenteous, pure and blessed praise, in the way that our Lord loves and with which He is pleased). After concluding the prayer the Prophet ﷺ enquired as to who had said that. When the man appeared before him, the Prophet told

him that his utterance was so beloved to the angels that seventy of them rushed to carry it to the heavens.[10]

Shaykh al-Hind said that while the Prophet had great appreciation for this act, there is no hadith that can be found suggesting that he or the other Companions made this a part of their regular prayer. Therefore, we learn that the purpose behind the praise was merely to show the virtue of the words uttered, rather than prescribing its regular incorporation into the prayer. However, as he did not reject this particular Companion's action, one is allowed to recite it occasionally, but the hadith cannot be taken as authorization for its inclusion as a standard component of the prayer.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' used to apply the same principle in other contexts as well. For example, a famous report on the authority of A'ishah ﷺ, indicates that the Prophet ﷺ had visited the graveyard of Baqī' on the 15th of Sha'ban and had prayed for the dead. On the strength of this hadith, it is assumed that it is the normative Sunnah to visit graveyards on the 15th of Sha'ban.

On this issue Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' took the position that it is not Sunnah to make a regular practice of visiting the graveyard on the "night of emancipation". However, since it is clearly lawful, the occasional observance of this practice can be considered a Sunnah.

The rationale behind this opinion is that there is only one hadith in the entire corpus to indicate that he had visited the graveyard on this night, and it has not been established that he made it a regular practice. Accordingly, the Companions did not visit graveyards on this night as a general rule. The wisdom, therefore, lies in the understanding that every action should be treated on the basis of its rightful category and in proper accordance with its established status.

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10 Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and a similar narration can be found in Muslim.

Likewise, another hadith states that while passing by two graves the Prophet ﷺ remarked that their occupants were being subjected to the punishment of the grave. He then planted one branch of a tree on each of them saying, "It is hoped that Allah may lighten their punishment by the time these branches become dry."[11]

This has led to some discussion among hadith scholars as to whether this was specific to the Prophet ﷺ or whether other Muslims too could plant branches on graves in the hope of providing some relief from punishment for those buried within.

Upon being asked, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' stated that there was only one such incident reported in the entirety of the hadith collections. There is no such report before or after this incident, nor did the Prophet ﷺ or the Companions follow this practice on a regular basis. Had it been a normative practice, the Companions would have made a point of planting branches on the grave of every Muslim. However, there is nothing on record to support this position. Also, there is a possibility that the behaviour of the Prophet on this occasion was exceptional, in which case, it would be incorrect to do it regularly on the assumption that it is an effective means of relief from punishment in the grave. However, if one follows the example of the Prophet ﷺ by observing this act only occasionally, in the hope that it may alleviate the agonies of the deceased, then doing so gives rise to no cause for objection.

Reasons for the decline of the Muslim community

Shaykh al-Hind returned to Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband after suffering four long years of imprisonment in Malta.[12] Those familiar with Shaykh al-Hind know that his was not the imprisonment of an

11 Bukhārī.

12 For further details of Shaykh al-Hind's imprisonment in Malta one may refer to *Asīrān-i Māltā*.

ordinary political figure. Throughout the Freedom Movement this devout ascetic sought only to please Allah and pursue the welfare of the Muslim community. Even in the days of his exile and helplessness his constant refrain was, "Praise be to Allah, as my imprisonment is a test from Him rather than a consequence of wrongdoing on my part."

One day, because he appeared so dejected, some of his fellow inmates attempted to comfort him. To this he replied, "I am not particularly concerned about the hardship, as it will come to an end one day. What worries me most is whether or not my striving will be acceptable to Allah."

After his return from Malta, he stayed at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband one night in the company of the scholars there. At a certain point he announced, "During my stay in Malta I learnt two lessons." Upon hearing this, everyone was all ears, for they wanted to know what this eighty-year old scholar had learnt after years of teaching *'ulamā'*. He continued,

> During the solitude of my imprisonment I reflected on the question as to why the Muslims are experiencing decline, both inwardly and outwardly. I came to the conclusion that two factors account for it: our neglect of the Qur'an and the internal conflicts and dissensions that divide us. I have, therefore, returned with the resolve to spend the rest of my life promoting both the reading and comprehension of the Qur'an. Qur'an reading schools for children should be set up in every town. As for the adults, they should be familiarised with the message of the Qur'an and encouraged to put its teachings into practice. Furthermore, in-fighting amongst Muslims must be made completely unacceptable.

Notwithstanding his preoccupations and failing health, he strove tirelessly to redress these manifest problems. He initiated

the Qur'an Study Circle, which was attended by all the *'ulamā'* of the town, including Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī and Mawlānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī. People joined it in large numbers and Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was fortunate enough to attend it. It is regrettable that Shaykh al-Hind passed away so soon after its inception. That chalice is broken and that cupbearer is no more.

Reciting the Qur'an while praying behind an Imam

While teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Shaykh al-Hind once delivered an extensive lecture on the issue of reciting the Qur'an while praying behind an Imam. He emphatically clarified the Ḥanafī position on the issue in a way that left the audience spellbound. After the lecture, a student told him, "Had Imam Shāfi'ī himself been present today at your lecture, he would have revised his stance on the matter." This infuriated Shaykh al-Hind, who retorted, "What do you know about Imam Shāfi'ī? Had he been alive today, I don't think I would have found any alternative but to follow him."

Incidents involving the Khilafat Movement

Shaykh al-Hind was the moving spirit behind this movement, regarding which, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' recalled that he had never witnessed such intense fervour in any previous general uprising. The honesty, sincerity and hard work of the Shaykh fuelled the movement's momentum across the country, and although Muslims comprised the great majority of the popular driving force behind it, the Shaykh also allowed a significant presence from the Hindu victims of British imperialism to participate in the movement. However, he was wary of the potential dangers presented by constant interaction between the Muslims and the Hindus in terms of any dilution of the movement's primary commitment to the goals of the Shari'ah, or any blurring of the essential distinctions between the Hindu and Islamic religions and cultures.

Proof of his vigilance in this respect emerged when a joint meeting of Hindus and Muslims resolved, as a goodwill gesture towards all Hindus, that Muslims would not slaughter cows that year in celebration of the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā. When word of this reached him, Shaykh al-Hind was so disconcerted by it that not only did he oppose the resolution verbally, but he openly defied it by going out of his way to obtain a cow and slaughter it publicly, rather than sacrificing a goat as he would usually have done.[13]

His difference of opinion with his illustrious student, Mawlānā Thānawī, on the issue of the Khilafat Movement is widely known. The latter did not regard this movement as beneficial for the Muslims and therefore dissociated himself from it. Notwithstanding the divergence of opinion, both the teacher and his former student behaved graciously towards each other in this regard, it being acknowledged that their differences were genuinely motivated and well grounded.[14]

When some activists organised a Khilafat meeting in Thānā Bhawan and requested Shaykh al-Hind to preside, he declined, saying, "I will never do this. If I hold this session in Thāna Bhawan, it would offend Mawlawī Ashraf ʿAlī. He would also be faced with the very awkward dilemma of how to remain true to his principles without being forced to boycott a programme addressed by me. I can therefore do no such thing." Hence, Shaykh al-Hind travelled all over the country, with the exception of Thāna Bhawan, in his efforts to mobilise support for the Khilafat Movement.

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13 For details regarding the role of *maṣlaḥah* or public interest in the sacrificing of the cow in this instance, one may refer to *Islām aur Siyāsat*, compiled by Mawlāna Isḥāq Multānī from the teachings of Mawlāna Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī.

14 To gain an understanding of the juristic reasoning behind the difference of opinion, one may refer to *Takmilah al-Iʿtidāl fī Marātib ar-Rijāl*, compiled by Mawlāna ʿĀshiq Ilāhī Bulandshehrī.

His exemplary devotion to Allah
Mawlānā Thānawī was teaching at a madrasah in Kanpur, when he invited his mentor Shaykh al-Hind to attend its annual conference. Some of the *'ulamā'* of Kanpur excelled in the rational sciences, which resulted in a tendency towards religious innovation. Because the *'ulamā'* of the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband were principally engaged in the sciences of the *deen*, it was assumed that they had little knowledge of the rational sciences. Being a young man at the time, one of Mawlānā Thānawī's main motives for inviting Shaykh al-Hind to deliver a lecture at Kanpur was in order to provide a showcase for the local *'ulamā'* to appreciate the stature of the *'ulamā'* of Deoband, and their expertise in both the rational and traditional sciences.

As the function progressed Shaykh al-Hind was invited to address the audience, and at a certain point during his speech he coincidentally entered into a scientific matter. The expected local *'ulamā'* joined the gathering just as Shaykh al-Hind was about to reach the climax of his presentation. Mawlāna Thānawī was immensely pleased by this, as it would demonstrate Shaykh al-Hind's command of the subject in hand. However, it was at this very moment that the Shaykh suddenly fell silent. Surprised by this, Mawlāna Fakhr al-Ḥasan Gangohī[15] asked him, "Why did you stop just when you were really beginning to speak?" He replied, "It is exactly for that reason that I stopped speaking."

In other words, when he started his lecture there was no doubt in his mind that he was speaking purely for Allah's sake. However, as soon as he became aware that the temptation to show off his knowledge had entered his heart, he preferred to cut his delivery short.

15 Mawlāna Fakhr al-Ḥasan was a student of the main founders of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and one of its earlier students. He had also written a commentary of Abū Dāwūd: *At-Ta'līq al-Maḥmūd*. He died in 1315/1897. One may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, published by Dār Ibn Ḥazm.

Extreme modesty and simplicity

Mawlānā Mu'in ad-Dīn of the Madrasah Muʿiniyya in Ajmer, was an accomplished scholar of the rational sciences. He had heard reports about Shaykh al-Hind's attainments and resolved to visit him in Deoband. He arrived at his house in the summer and was welcomed by a man dressed only in a vest and *tahband*. Mawlānā Mu'in ad-Dīn introduced himself and said that he wished to meet Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan. The man warmly led him inside the house and offered him a seat, assuring him that he would certainly get an opportunity to meet the Mawlānā.

The man then served him a drink. The guest reminded him about meeting Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan. The man reassured him once more and encouraged him to relax and not to worry. A little later, the man returned with food and insisted on him eating it. At this point, unable to conceal his growing agitation, Mawlānā Ajmerī said, "I have come to meet Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, therefore could you please inform him." The man calmly responded, "He has been informed, so please eat and you will get to meet him." When the meal was over, the man then offered the guest a fan for comfort in the heat. As the lengthy wait continued, the guest could contain himself no longer and burst out, "I've wasted the whole day here without getting what I came for!" At this, the man who had been serving him so patiently finally announced, "The truth is that I am not some 'Mawlānā', but Maḥmūd happens to be my name." Mawlānā Mu'in ad-Dīn was astounded and instantly recognised not only the Shaykh's modesty and simplicity, but also his advanced spiritual standing.

Making concessions for the young

Mawlānā Maḥmūd Rāmpūrī was the father-in-law of Mawlānā Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyab,[16] the Chancellor of Dār al-ʿUlūm

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16 Mawlānā Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyab Qāsimī, also referred to as *Ḥakīm al-Islām*,

Deoband. The former came from a family known for both their sincerity in the *deen* and their high social rank. He had cordial relations with all the leading scholars of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Once enrolled there, he was allotted a small room near a mosque referred to as "the small mosque". Shaykh al-Hind passed by it everyday on his way to and from the Dār al-'Ulūm.

One day he spotted Mawlānā Maḥmūd Rāmpūrī standing there. Shaykh al-Hind was not aware of his having enrolled, and so asked him about the purpose of his visit. In reply, he told him about his enrolment and his place of residence. Shaykh al-Hind went to take a look at his lodgings and noticed that the bedding was lying on the floor as the room contained no bed.

When Shaykh al-Hind returned, he kept in mind the likely hardship this situation would have been causing Mawlānā Maḥmūd. Therefore, he soon obtained a bed for him and carried it through the alleyways and the market until he reached the mosque where Mawlānā Maḥmūd was staying. As he approached, he saw him leaving the mosque and pictured Mawlānā Maḥmūd's embarrassment at the idea of the Shaykh carrying his bed in this way. Therefore, Shaykh al-Hind immediately placed the bed on the ground and said laughing, "My brother, take your bed inside. I am the son of a Shaykh, not a porter!"

Consideration for opponents

An associate of Shaykh al-Hind wrote a tract refuting the positions

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was the son of Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad Qāsimī, and the grandson of Mawlānā Qāsim Nanotawī. He studied alongside Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. They also gave *bay'ah* to the same Shaykhs and received *khilāfah* from Mawlāna Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. He was appointed as the *Muhtamim* or Chancellor of the Dār al-'Ulūm in 1348/1929, and became its longest standing Chancellor by serving for more than half a century. He undertook many tablīgh tours in his lifetime and is famously known for his oral discourses, which have been published in ten volumes. He died in 1403/1982. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband* and *Nuqūsh-i Raftagān*.

of those who practise innovations in matters of belief. In response to this, they branded him a disbeliever. In return, he composed two couplets in Persian, which he recited before Shaykh al-Hind:

You called me a disbeliever, but I do not mind.
For falsehood does not flourish.

So, in return I will call you a Muslim.
For only falsehood can repay falsehood.

Although the Shaykh appreciated the poetic beauty, he cautioned him not to brand anyone a disbeliever. Therefore, he advised him to alter the couplets as follows:

You called me a disbeliever, but I do not mind.
For falsehood does not flourish.

So, in return I will call you a Muslim,
And repay something bitter with something sweet.

If you are a true believer, then let it be.
For only falsehood can repay falsehood.

Respect for contemporary scholars

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' recounted that someone held a big marriage reception in Deoband, to which the teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband were invited. Shaykh al-Hind, along with Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad[17] and others, went to the reception.

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17 Mawlana Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad Qāsimī (Ḥāfiẓ Ṣāḥib) was the son of Mawlāna Qāsim Nanotawī. He was appointed as the fifth *Mohtamim* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband by Mawlāna Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. In 1340/1921., Ḥāfiẓ Ṣāḥib was appointed as the Muftī of the High Court in Hyderabad Dakkan. As a result of this appointment, an honorary position of *Sadar Mohtamim* (chief administrative officer) was created for him by the *Shūrā* (consultative council) of the Dār al-'Ulūm, in order to ensure that the Dār al-'Ulūm was not deprived of his services. Along with his scholarly credentials, he had been granted *khilāfah* by Ḥajī 'Imdād Allah Muhājir

Shaykh al-Hind sat in the company of the masses. However, acts considered contrary to the Sharī'ah were taking place there.

A number of the Dār al-'Ulūm teachers asked Shaykh al-Hind if he would advise the host to abstain from this awkward behaviour. Whilst indicating towards Mawlāna Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad, Shaykh al-Hind replied, "In the presence of one's elders, you have come to me. It would be a lack of etiquette on my part to say anything in their presence." He made this observation even though Mawlāna Muḥammad Aḥmad was actually his contemporary. However, Allah had granted Shaykh al-Hind a depth of humility that made him unaware of his own status. Therefore, it came naturally to him to regard himself as subordinate to his peers.

"The senior Mawlawī"

Even though Shaykh al-Hind's greatness was already well established by the time Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was born, he did not appreciate being addressed by lengthy honorific titles, and even the title 'Shaykh al-Hind' would not come into popular use until much later. Nonetheless, in spite of his evident distaste for it, he was referred to as "the senior *Mawlawī Ṣāḥib*". It is well known to his friends and relatives that whenever "the senior *Mawlawī Ṣāḥib*" knocked at the door, he would simply announce himself with, "servant Maḥmūd is here!"[18]

Makkī in *taṣawwuf*. He died in 1347/1928 and in this way one of the most blessed eras of the management of Dār al-'Ulūm came to an end. For further biographical details one may refer to *Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Ki 50 Mithālī Shakhsiyyāt*.

18 The present author's grandfather, Mawlāna Muḥammad Yāsīn, was from the lineage of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān ﷺ and was a fellow student of Mawlāna Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. His teachers included Mawlāna Ya'qūb Nānotawī, Shaykh al-Hind and Mawlāna Sayyid Aḥmad Dihlawī. His students include Mawlāna Sayyid Aṣghar Ḥusain, *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī and the Ahl-i Ḥadīth scholar Mawlāna Thanā Allāh Amritsarī. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, his Shaykh was Mawlāna Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. He died in 1355/1936. For more biographical details one may refer to his biography *Mere Wālid Mājid Aur Unke Mujarrab 'Amaliyyāt*.

Association with the madrasah

While teaching at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, and with modest resources, Shaykh al-Hind launched the famous international *Reshmī Rūmāl* movement.[19] The scholars of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband had, nonetheless, some divergence of opinion about this project. Mawlāna Muḥammad Aḥmad and Mawlāna Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān, who were the administrative supervisors, held the view that Dār al-'Ulūm should engage with the movement in a quietist manner so as to continue ministering to the vital educational needs of the Muslim community, and that no such step should be taken on its campus that would be likely to jeopardise the institution's ability to fulfil this role.[20]

Contrary to this position, Shaykh al-Hind's heart and soul were preoccupied with raising the banner of Islam and the movement of Indian independence. On one occasion, a private meeting was convened in his room with those at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband who did not share his viewpoint. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', who was very young at the time, somehow managed to get in unnoticed and witnessed their heated debate. Being so inexperienced he could not follow most of their deliberations, but he certainly recalled that it was a lengthy affair and that the association of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband with the political movement was the bone of contention.

Notwithstanding the difference of opinion, everyone at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband fully cooperated with Shaykh al-Hind, while he, also, maintained close and cordial relations with those who differed with him. However, when he left for Hajj and was im-

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19 For more details around the *Reshmī Rūmāl* movement, one may refer to *Taḥrīk-i Reshmī Rūmāl*, compiled by Mawlāna Muḥammad Miyān.

20 To learn about the rationale and benefits of keeping the *madrasah* separate from politics, one may refer to Muftī Taqī 'Usmānī's *Mere Wālid Mere Shaykh Aur Unkā Mizāj-o-Mazāq*.

prisoned in Malta, some of his detractors spread the rumour that after a breakdown of relations between him and the directors, he had severed his ties with Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband.

Therefore, after his release from Malta, Shaykh al-Hind was extremely hurt to learn that such rumours had been deliberately circulated in his absence. When he arrived at Deoband, in addition to the staff of the Dār al-'Ulūm, almost half of the local population was gathered at the railway station to greet him. It was assumed that he would go to his home. However, he announced that he would go straight to Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and meet everyone there, which sufficed to put an end to the aforementioned rumours.

Job at the college and serving the cause of Islam

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' recalled that a competent teacher at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, who was Shaykh al-Hind's student, was offered a job at a college, with an attractive salary. He consulted Shaykh al-Hind and pleaded, "I teach here from eight to ten hours per day and spend the rest of my time on preparing for our lectures. It hardly leaves any time for giving public talks or any other academic work. The college will demand fewer teaching hours, so in my spare time I would be in a better position to serve the cause of Islam, as well as make some kind of contribution to academia. I am therefore inclined towards accepting this offer." Shaykh al-Hind, however, opposed this, saying, "*Mawlawī Ṣāḥib*, I do not think you will be able to serve the cause of Islam as much as you do here."

Although Shaykh al-Hind was not convinced, he let him take up the job at the college. After a year he returned to Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband during the holidays and called on Shaykh al-Hind. After greeting him and asking about his well-being, he inquired, "How many books and juristic rulings have you produced? And how many public lectures have you delivered during the course

of the year?" Upon hearing this, he burst into tears and said, "I was not convinced by the logic of your viewpoint. However, you have been proved right. Although I had more time there, I could not accomplish any of the things that I used to manage at the Dār al-'Ulūm in the face of a very busy schedule."

The Roorkee Cantonment

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' also related an extraordinary insight of Mawlāna Gangohī[21] at the time when a factory was established in Roorkee.[22] Since mass production and industrial machinery were uncommon in those days, it attracted much attention and was popularly known as the Roorkee Cantonment. One day, while addressing the teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, Mawlāna Gangohī said, "We are like the cogs in the Roorkee Cantonment. As long as they are fitted into a machine, they work well and are essential. However, once removed from the machine they are of no benefit and become worthless."

Teaching and divine reward

Mawlāna Muḥammad Sahūl 'Usmānī[23] was a distinguished stu-

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21 Mawlāna Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī is considered to be one of the main founding fathers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was a fellow student of Mawlāna Qāsim Nānotawī. They both studied the rational sciences under Mawlāna Mamlūk 'Alī Nānotawī and Hadith under Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Mujaddidī. Thereafter, they both gave *bay'ah* to Ḥajī 'Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī. It is said that within 40 days, Ḥajī *Ṣāḥib* granted Mawlānā Gangohī *Khilāfah* or election as a guide. After the death of Mawlānā Nānotawī, Mawlānā Gangohī became the second *Sarparast* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. In 1314/1896, he also accepted the position of *Sarparast* of the sister Dār al-'Ulūm: Mazāhir 'Ulūm Sahāranpūr. After his third Hajj, he initiated *dawrah* or annual completion of the six major books of Hadith in Gangoh. Around 300 students had the good fortune of studying Hadith with him, including Shaykh al-Hind. He died in 1323/1905. For further biographical details one may refer to his biography entitled *Tadhkirat ar-Rashīd*.

22 A city in Northern India.

23 Mawlānā Sahūl Bhāghalpūrī taught in many different madrasahs across India

dent of Shaykh al-Hind and a renowned teacher of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, who had mastery over both Hadith and *fiqh*. He asked Shaykh al-Hind, "We teach matters of religion and receive remuneration for it. Therefore, will we get any divine reward for this?" To this the Shaykh replied, "Why do you talk of divine reward? If Allah does not take us to task for our lapses in this, we should thank Him for it."

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s commentary on this was that Shaykh al-Hind did not mean that Allah will not reward the teaching of religion if the teacher has accepted material remuneration for this task. Where the teacher's intention is coupled with God consciousness, divine reward may follow. However, the teacher should also do justice to the task at hand. If the teachers are not present, their teaching inadequate or their lessons are badly prepared, then their salary is not lawful. Shaykh al-Hind was merely wishing to draw attention to this aspect by a switch of emphasis.

Calling to the deen in today's context

In a famous Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ is on record as having said, "When these four signs are present, one should look to oneself and abandon the calling of others (to the *deen*): When people are governed by greed, led by base desires, prefer this world over the Hereafter and become obsessed with opinions that they have formulated for themselves." [24]

When Shaykh al-Hind was asked whether the obligation to call others to the deen was now abrogated, based on the proposi-

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and was appointed at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband as the fifth *Sadr* Muftī (Chief Muftī responsible for issuing fatwas or religious verdicts received by the Dār al-'Ulūm . His students include Shaykh al-Adab Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī. He died in 1367 AH See *Tārīkh-i Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband*.

24 Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim. Classified by al-Dhahabī as authentic.

tion that these signs had already begun to appear in society, he rejected the idea. Responding many years later to the same issue, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' made the following points: The hadith in question states that when the propagation of Islam has become pointless and showing concern for others bears the risk of exposure to personal jeopardy, one is better off focusing on improving one's own conduct. However, the situation is not yet so extreme, and if one calls to Islam with sincerity, concern and tact, one may still meet with positive results. What accounts for the deteriorating state of affairs around us is that we have neglected the obligation to call others to the *deen* in an effective manner. If we discharge this duty well, there is still hope that the situation can improve.

Ḥakīm al-Ummat Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī[25]

After Shaykh al-Hind's demise, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' pledged his oath of allegiance to Mawlānā Thānawī, for whom his love and devotion were beyond question. He drew heavily upon Mawlānā Thānawī's teachings, and witnesses recall how he would tremble at the mention of Mawlānā Thānawī's name. An entire volume of reports could be compiled on the subject of his associa-

25 Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī—referred to as *Mujaddid al-Millat* (the renewer of the community) and *Ḥakīm al-Ummat* (physician of the community)—is arguably the most famous graduate of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was one of the leading students of Mawlānā Ya'qūb Nānotawī and a *Khalīfah* of Ḥajī 'Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī. He was appointed as the fifth *Sarparast* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was one of the most prolific writers in the history of Islam and wrote books on practically all of the Islamic disciplines. However, Mawlānā Thānawī's specialism was *taṣawwuf*. His sayings and speeches were written down by his associates and his oral discourses have been published in over 60 volumes. He also wrote a commentary of Mawlānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī* which has been published in 32 volumes. He died in 1362/1943, leaving behind disciples such as Muftī Shafī', Mawlānā Masīḥ Allāh Khān, Qārī Ṭayyab, *'Allāmah* Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, Mawlānā Wasīy Allāh Ilāhabādi, Muftī Ḥasan Amritsarī, Dr. 'Abd al-Ḥayy 'Ārifī and Mawlānā Abrār al-Ḥaqq Hardoī. For further biographical details one may refer to his biography entitled *Ashraf as-Sawāniḥ*, written by Khwājah 'Azīz al-Ḥasan Majzūb.

tion with Mawlānā Thānawī. In fact, Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ did indeed compile a selection of Mawlānā Thānawī's sayings in a work entitled *Majālis Ḥakīm al-Ummat*. Some of these also appear in another book called *Khatimat as-Sawāniḥ*, which includes material relating to the period of his terminal illness. In view of the wealth of published sources, there is little justification for attempting to elaborate any further on this subject. Nonetheless, there is certainly some benefit to be gained from including some of the more salient episodes, to which we now turn our attention.

Some time after Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ's death Mawlānā Akbar[26] called on the present author to relate something of value which, were I ever to undertake to write my father's biography, was to be included in it. He proceeded to relate that it had been his privilege to have kept the company of Mawlāna Thānawī over a very long period of time, during which he had observed many of his students and disciples. Therefore, he wished to confirm that Muftī Shafīʿ and Ḥadrat Majdhūb[27] excelled all others in their sincere devotion to Mawlāna Thānawī.

This surprised me and I told him that I was under the impres-

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26 Mawlānā Akbar ʿAlī was a student of Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Mawlānā Yaḥyā Ṣāḥib Kāndhlawī and Ḥadrat Shaykh Zakarīyya Kāndhlawī, amongst others. After graduating from Maẓāhir ʿUlūm, Sahāranpūr, he taught there for 30 years. Thereafter, upon the invitation of Muftī Shafīʿ, he taught for the remaining 20 years of his life in Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi. His students include Ḥadratjī Mawlānā Yūsuf Kāndhlawī, Ḥadratjī Mawlānā Inʿām al-Ḥasan, Mawlāna Saʿīd Aḥmad Khān, Muftī Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī and Muftī Taqī ʿUthmānī. He also translated Mawlāna Raḥmat Allāh Kirānawī's *Izhār al-Ḥaqq* into Urdu within a short duration of six months. He died in 1397/1977 and was buried in the graveyard of Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi. For further biographical details one may refer to *Nuqūsh-i Raftagān*.

27 Khwāja ʿAzīz al-Ḥasan Majdhūb (Khwāja Ṣāḥib) was one of the senior disciples of Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī. He came from an affluent background, as his father was a lawyer. Khwāja Ṣāḥib served the country as a deputy inspector of education. He also wrote the official biography of Mawlānā Thānawī, entitled *Ashraf as-Sawāniḥ*. However, he is more famously known for his poetry. It is said that he was to Mawlāna Ashraf ʿAlī like Amīr Khusraw was to Khwāja Niẓām ad-Dīn

sion that, besides Ḥaḍrat Majdhūb, Mawlāna Muftī Muḥammad Ḥasan[28] was the one most devoted to Mawlāna Thānawī. To this he asserted, "My contention is based on my first-hand, close observation. Had I been exaggerating, I would not have included Ḥaḍrat Majdhūb in this list."

He then described in detail how Muftī Shafī' used to sit during Mawlānā Thānawī's sessions. He used to watch the Mawlānā in rapt attention, and whenever he said anything which happened to hit the mark, Muftī Shafī' would suddenly make an exclamation of involuntary ecstasy.

Muftī Muhammad Shafī' described at length in *Majālis Ḥakīm al-Ummat* how he was introduced to Mawlānā Thānawī. This topic is also covered in the articles featured in the magazine *al-Balāgh*, therefore, it is unnecessary to duplicate it here. However, with respect to the introduction of fresh evidence in support of the remarkable relationship between them, the following paragraphs contain extracts from letters written to him by Mawlānā Thānawī.

Correspondence with Mawlānā Thānawī

Muftī Muhammad Shafī' recorded his correspondence with Mawlānā Thānawī in a special notebook, from which some selections have previously appeared in the magazine *al-Balāgh*. The collection is yet to be published in full, but what has clearly come

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Awliyā'. Khwāja Ṣāḥib died in 1363/1944. For further biographical details one may refer to *Kashkūl-i Majdhūb*.

28 Muftī Muḥammad Ḥasan Amritsarī was one of the senior *khulafā'* or successors of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. After studying in Deoband under the likes of 'Allāmah Anwār Shāh Kashmīrī, he taught for nearly half a century in Madrasah Ghaznawīyyah, Amritsar. During his residence in Amritsar, he used to give a daily Qur'an lesson in the mosque, attended by people from diverse denominations. After the partition, he moved to Lahore and established Jāmi'a Ashrafīyya. He died in 1380/1960. For further details one may refer to his biography entitled *Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muftī Muḥammad Ḥasan Amritsarī aur unke Mashahīr Talāmiza-o-Khulafā'*.

to light is the extent to which they illustrate Mawlānā Thānawī's overflowing affection for Muftī Muhammad Shafī'. This is borne out in the following selections.

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On arriving in Deoband from Thāna Bhawan, Muftī Muhammad Shafī' wrote to him: "After taking leave of you I reached Deoband. Once again I am overwhelmed by the worries and engagements from which I had been free so long as I was in Thāna Bhawan; it was like a sojourn in Paradise."

To this, Mawlānā Thānawī replied: "O you who are out of sight, I hand you over to Allah. I pray fervently to Allah that you flourish in desirable and conducive conditions. *Was-salam*. Ashraf 'Alī".

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In another letter he wrote to Mawlānā Thānawī: "I need your special prayers, though I do not deserve them. Yet I need these and look forward to your positive response on every occasion." In his reply Mawlānā Thānawī comforted and consoled him fully, displaying his love, affection and concern for him: "We share your grief, therefore do not grieve."

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In a letter dated 28, Jumādā II 1352 AH (1933 CE), Muftī Muhammad Shafī' wrote:

> What is most regrettable is that I could not pursue further the path which I had undertaken under your supervision, as my other engagements did not permit me to do so. This was further compounded by my weak spirit and negligence. In sum, I have not been able to achieve anything and nor can I foresee any change. I therefore need your special prayers and attention all the more, for I sense that this is what will ensure my deliverance.

Mawlānā Thānawī sent him this inspiring reply:

> Allah willing, you will not face any loss. If you do not gain accomplishment by walking, you will do so by flying." In return, Muftī Muhammad Shafī' wrote: "Your gracious letter brought me immeasurable happiness. Your assurance of flying instead of walking has renewed my spirit." Mawlānā Thānawī further assured him by saying: "If Allah wills, you will witness it in due course."

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Muftī Muhammad Shafī' once wrote (Letter of 28 Ramadan 1347/1928): "During the prayer, especially in the latter hours of the night, I experience a kind of ecstasy. At times I start crying and I do not feel like moving to another posture of prayer until I am fatigued. In particular, I desire to prolong the act of prostration." To this he received the reply: "This condition is sometimes not even attained by the elders. What more could you want?"

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In a letter of Ramadan 1348/1930 Muftī Muhammad Shafī' stated:

> At times, when I am not overwhelmed by negligence and by my awkward disposition, I do some soul searching and think of Allah's greatness and glory, and I end up in bewilderment. For I find myself helpless, like a straw sailing on the waves of an ocean, as though I were the very manifestation that "everywhere there is quenching drink enough to suffice", and I no longer perceive any word or action of my own. However, even in this state I am not swayed by any notion of fatalism. I intuitively do not find this helplessness to be in any way incompatible with the doctrine of freewill.
>
> One day, in the state of being overwhelmed by Divine majesty, I felt like 'a nightingale with a broken wing, distant from the garden' whilst repeating the couplet:

> *And how can one reach Su'ād when,*
> *She is beyond high summits, and beyond them are deaths.*

> Therefore, I started to become despondent. However, immediately the truth of divine mercy dawned upon me. I realised that I had not attained to this station by dint of my own ability, nor was I capable of advancing any further; only Allah's mercy has brought me to this stage. With His help I may achieve something one day.
>
> After much thought I have recorded my innermost feelings. It is not some fantasy, yet I wonder whether it is correct to call it a 'state', as it is not consistent; but I certainly experience it, whenever my heart is conscious.

In response Mawlānā Thānawī wrote:

> Praise be to Allah! He has immersed you in the ocean. As a result, there is a tumult that sways you. If you are overwhelmed by this, you will follow in the footsteps of Prophet Yūnus[29] ﷺ. If you overcome this stage, you will emulate the way of Prophet Mūsā[30] ﷺ. In either case you are blessed. I am mightily pleased with this for I want all of my friends to undergo such stages.

Other letters relate similar states of being. Mawlānā Thānawī responded to them in a rapturous fashion: "From the start of the letter to the end, these are the signposts of undertaking the path upon which completion is expected. So, let us extract, drink and enjoy, if Allah *Ta'ālā* wills."

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In a letter of Shawwāl 1348/1930 Muftī Muhammad Shafī' wrote: "Though no argument could convince me earlier, I am now struck

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29 The allusion is to the Prophet Yūnus being swallowed by the fish.

30 The allusion is to the Prophet Mūsā crossing the sea.

by this manifest truth; that on our own we cannot accomplish anything, rather we are like a feather in a distant land which is at the mercy of the wind." Mawlānā Thānawī responded: "Congratulations upon your discovery."

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In Dhū al-Ḥijja 1347/1929, Muftī Muhammad wrote:

> Before I got up in the early hours of the night, I saw in a dream that I was on the roof of my house. It was early night. As I rose for the *isha* prayer, I saw on the eastern horizon the inscription in bold, golden letters, "O Allah!" Next to it there hung two tablets with inscriptions which could not be read from a distance. I saw some other writing in majestic scripts of different forms. While I was engrossed in the sight of all of this, one tablet was placed on my roof. I rushed to pick it up. However, I thought it deserved the same respect due to a copy of the Qur'ān. Then I realised that I was not in the state of *wuḍū'*. So I picked up that golden tablet with a handkerchief. I glanced at it and noted that "*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*" (the Preserved Tablet) was inscribed on it. I also decided that since this precious gift was from Allah, I would turn my full attention to it after the *isha* congregation. So I placed it where I usually perform the prayer and went to join the *'ishā'* congregation. It was at that point that I woke up. Kindly interpret this dream for me so that I can get some relief from the perplexity of it all. If this request is in any way inappropriate, then please take whatever steps are best suited to my needs.

Mawlānā Thānawī replied: "It appears that the gnosis and love of Allah has been inscribed on your heart. Congratulations."

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In Ṣafar of 1345/1926, Muftī Muhammad Shafī' wrote:

> One night I saw myself in a garden. It seemed that I had re-

> turned from the path of Allah. As I rested in a corner of that garden, someone approached me. It was Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān, sent by the management of the madrasah. He told me that the Prophet ﷺ had summoned him. With great delight I accompanied them. I saw some tents and I was told that the Prophet ﷺ had been staying there. On the way, I learnt also that preparations were being made for the path of Allah and I was summoned to participate in the task.

In reply, Mawlānā Thānawī told him: "Allah willing, you will have the opportunity to serve the cause of Islam in a manner that will prove to be beneficial."

In this letter, Muftī Muhammad Shafī' related another dream:

> I dreamt that some people had brought the Black Stone from Makkah to our house, carrying it on their heads. When they reached our home, my wife rushed to take it. Being too heavy she could not hold it and it fell to the ground. I was watching all of this from my roof. As I saw it falling I rushed down and on getting closer I found, by Allah's grace, that it was completely undamaged.

Mawlānā Thānawī's interpretation soon followed: "At some point in time, you will be granted a centre for the support of the *deen*."

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Muftī Muhammad Shafī' used to consult Mawlānā Thānawī on every matter of importance; his letters refer to many of his domestic and professional affairs. In a letter in which he discussed some of these matters, he concluded: "After having written all this it strikes me that while your other students raise important issues, and benefit from your valuable guidance, I am so hopeless that I just fill my letters to you with mundane matters."

In his response to this Mawlānā Thānawī used a sentence that

only an accomplished spiritual mentor could write, one fully able to comprehend every aspect of life. Confident that he would not be misunderstood, he said to him: "But what is considered worldly for others is religion for you." (Letter of 30 Rabīʿ I 1352/1933)

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The following extract illustrates his love and admiration for his mentor and the deep compatibility between them:

> For a long time it has been my experience that your affection towards me has struck directly at my heart, as it radiates from you like rays of light. As a result of this relationship, wherever I am, I can sense your location as if directed by a compass, and am drawn towards you. When I go walking in the evenings, I turn towards Thāna Bhawan in order to lessen the distance between us as much as possible, so as to benefit from the increase in proximity to you.

Mawlānā Thānawī responded by saying, "This is an indication of the perfect compatibility between us."

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Mawlānā Thānawī would always enquire about Muftī Muhammad Shafīʿ's academic activities, such as publications, juristic rulings or sermons, and he would also take him into his confidence regarding his own work, since he had adopted Mawlāna Thānawī's particular style. This pleased him a great deal and he showered supplications upon him.

On one occasion, Mawlānā Thānawī needed to complete an assignment, which was being held up by other people, he therefore entrusted it to Muftī Muhammad Shafīʿ instead. When he informed Mawlānā Thānawī of the initial progress, the latter wrote: "It is a relief to have entrusted the assignment to you. I cannot be sure about its completion, for this belongs to the realm of the unseen. However, as far as I can see, I feel very confident."

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Once there was a detailed discussion on a juristic issue. Muftī Muhammad Shafī‘ had some reservations about Mawlānā Thānawī's stance, which led to an exchange of correspondence. Eventually Muftī Muhammad Shafī‘ submitted (Letter of 10 Ramaḍān 1346/1928): "I was gratified by your gracious letter. By Allah's blessings the contentious issues have been amicably resolved. I am grateful to you." Mawlānā Thānawī's acknowledgement read: "May Allah grant you further qualities. Peace and Allah's mercy be upon you. O time you have pleased me, for the time is pleasing."[31]

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Mawlānā Thānawī was keen on the early publication of his book *al-Ḥīlah an-Nājizah*. Its first draft had been entrusted to my father. After finishing it he sent the draft back to Mawlānā Thānawī, with this note (17 Jumādā II 1351/1932): "Today I enclose the first part. I pray to Allah that you approve it." Mawlānā Thānawī replied: "Praise be to Allah! I liked it very much. After further examination, Allah willing, I will appreciate it even more."[32]

Permission for bay'ah (spiritual pledge)

The following is Mawlānā Thānawī's letter to Muftī Muhammad Shafī‘ authorising him to accept spiritual pledges (Letter of Rabī‘ II, 1349/1930):

> My affectionate Mawlawī Muḥammad Shafī‘, teacher at Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband, may Allah *Ta'ālā* protect you. Peace be upon you. It has occurred to me that I should authorise you, along

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31 For a practical example of how to deal with juristic differences with one's spiritual mentor, one may refer to Muftī Shafī‘ ‘Usmānī's *Pīr Aur Murīd Ka Fiqhī Ikhtilāf*, which can be found in *Jawāhir al-Fiqh*.

32 To learn more about *al-Ḥīlah an-Nājizah*, one may refer to the PhD dissertation entitled "Traditionalist Approaches to *Sharī'ah* Reform: Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Fatwa on Women's Right to Divorce" by Fareeha Khan (University of Michigan, 2008).

> with some others, to accept pledges from people. So, while reposing trust in Allah, I inform you that if any seeker of truth approaches you, you should accept his request. It will help both him and you. I pray for you. You may inform your friends of this. Out of prudence, I send this in a colourless envelope. From Allah's servant, Ashraf 'Alī, Thāna Bhawan.

On receiving this letter he wrote back to Mawlānā Thānawī:

> Your valuable letter arrived today. On reading this I was stunned. For I, being so imperfect, am not at all capable of accepting oaths of allegiance or of exhorting people to profess and practise the truth. Where is there piety and where is there not fault?
>
> I myself do not even know how to pledge an oath of allegiance to my superior. I am not aware of even the preliminaries of *sulūk*. How can I instruct anyone? Furthermore, which fool would approach me for guidance? I look again and again at your letter whilst thinking of my misconduct. I remain bewildered! I fear that my elevation to this position may bring it into disrepute. I therefore feel that this should not be publicised.

Mawlānā Thānawī replied: "It is exactly for this reason that you have been granted this authorisation." Muftī Muhammad Shafī' had told Mawlānā Thānawī that the bestowal of this status upon him made him all the more conscious of his failings. Yet, Mawlānā Thānawī insisted: "Allah *Ta'ālā* willing, this will bring about much benefit."

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Muftī Muhammad Shafī' spent most of his life at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. However, in 1362/1943, the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband had a serious difference of opinion regarding the strategy for the independence of India.[33] In order to avoid any damage to

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33 For further details around the context of this difference of opinion, one may

the Dār al-'Ulūm, both Muftī Muhammad Shafī' and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Ahmad 'Usmānī resigned from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. There were others who also resigned, such as Mawlānā Ibrāhīm Balyawī[34] and Mawlānā Zahur Ahmad.[35] This step was taken in consultation with Mawlānā Thānawī.

After his resignation, Mawlānā Thānawī offered Muftī Muhammad Shafī' an academic assignment at Thāna Bhawan. His job was to produce scholarly books under Mawlānā Thānawī's supervision. This greatly pleased him and he readily accepted the offer. When he reached Thāna Bhawan, Mawlānā Thānawī greeted him warmly and recited the first part of an Arabic couplet, which reads as follows:

People have lost him. What a gifted young man have they lost!

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The following is recorded in Muftī Muhammad Shafī''s memoirs, but he also recounted the incident on numerous occasions:

> In 1355/1936 or 1356/1937 some 'ulamā' of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband went to Thānā Bhawan to consult Mawlānā Thānawī on some important issues. Among this group was my teacher and mentor Mawlānā Sayyid Aṣghar Ḥusain and some others,

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refer to Muftī Rafī' 'Uthmānī's *Ḥayāt-i Muftī-e A'zam.*

34 Mawlānā Ibrāhīm Balyāwī was appointed as the *Sadr Muddaris* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband; a post which became solely administrative after Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī's death. Mawlānā Ibrāhīm is one of the four main ḥadīth students of Shaykh al-Hind. He was also appointed at one stage as the chief teacher in Jāmi'ah Islāmiyah, Dābhel, Gujarāt. He died in 1387/1967, leaving behind thousands of students who can be found in different parts of the world. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband.*

35 Mawlānā Ẓahūr Aḥmad was a student of *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and a senior teacher of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. In his 45 years of teaching, he taught at many different institutions, including Jāmi'ah Islāmiyah, Dābhel. He had given his *bay'ah* to Shaykh al-Hind in terms of *taṣawwuf.* He died in 1383/1963. For further details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulamā'-e Deoband.*

> whose names I cannot now recall. He granted us an appointment in the early morning. He also invited some of the *'ulamā'* from his *khānqāh* to join the consultation, but I do not recollect their names either.
>
> At the appointed time, we found Mawlānā Thānawī sitting on his prayer mat, beside the fountain. A mat was spread out for those present. It took me some time to do *wuḍū'*. When I reached the gathering place, all the others had already assembled. There was no room for me on the mat for the *'ulamā'*. On spotting me Mawlānā Thānawī called me to sit on his mat. Out of respect, I declined the offer and insisted on sitting beside the mat. He, however, asked me to sit beside him. When I joined him, he narrated the story of Dara Shikoh and Alamgir:[36] A *walī* of Allah invited both of them to sit beside him on the throne. Dara Shikoh declined, whereas Alamgir did as he was asked. As he sat on the throne the *walī* remarked: 'Our king wants to see Dara Shikoh as the next king. However, Allah intends to bless Alamgir with this honour.' A few years later, this is exactly what happened. Upon hearing this everyone, particularly Mawlānā Sayyid Aṣghar, congratulated me, saying that it was a good omen.[37]

Muftī Muhammad Shafī' had recounted the same incident three days prior to his demise.

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Muftī Muhammad Shafī' related several times that once Mawlānā Thānawī had asked him about his relations with Mawlānā Shāh Waṣī Allāh,[38] a *murīd* of Mawlānā Thānawī. He had been my

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36 To gain a basic historical understanding regarding Dara Shikoh and Alamgir, one may refer to the first chapter of Metcalf's *A Concise History of Modern India*.

37 For a detailed discussion around the permissibility of good omen, one may refer to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *Fatḥ-al-Bārī*, in the *Kitāb aṭ-Ṭibb*.

38 Mawlānā Shāh Waṣī Allāh Ilāhābādī was a senior disciple of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. He graduated from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband after studying under

father's classmate when studying *Kāfiyah*. In reply, Muftī Muhammad Shafī' recited a Persian couplet:

> *I and Majnūn [the archetypal lover] were fellow students together in the anvil of love,*
> *He went into the wilderness and I ended up in the alleys humiliated.*

Mawlānā Thānawī responded by saying, "Yes, you are right. This is the distribution of fate. Some are banished into the wilderness and others are handed a garland."

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Mawlānā 'Abd ash-Shakūr Tirmiẓī[39] narrates that when Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' and Muftī 'Abd al-Karīm Gumthalwī[40] finished compiling *al-Ḥīlah an-Nājizah*, Mawlānā Thānawī appreciated it greatly, saying, "You are like my two eyes. '*Ayn* is at the beginning of one's name [i.e. 'Abd al-Karīm] and also at the end of the other's [i.e. Muḥammad Shafī']."

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the likes of *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī. His gatherings were attended by people from different classes of society. He died in 1387/1967. For further biographical details one may refer to his biography entitled *Tazkirah-i Muṣliḥ-e Ummat*.

39 Mawlānā Muftī 'Abd ash-Shakūr Tirmidhī was the son of Muftī 'Abd al-Karīm Gumthalwī. He graduated from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband in 1365/1946 after studying under the likes of Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī, Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī and Mawlānā Fakhr al-Ḥasan. Also, during his stay in Madinah, he studied the ten variant readings of the Qur'ān under Qārī Muḥammad Fātiḥ. He also established Madrasah Haqqāniyah in Sāhīwāl, Pakistan. He first received *khilāfah* from Mawlānā Ẓafar Aḥmad 'Usmānī and then later by Muftī Shafī' 'Uthmānī. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulamā'-e Deoband*.

40 Muftī 'Abd al-Karīm Gumthalwī was a graduate of Maẓāhir 'Ulūm Sahāranpūr. He was appointed in Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī's *Khānqāh* (Sufi lodge) as a Muftī, teacher and author and spent most of his life under Mawlānā Thānawī's supervision. He also established more than a 100 madrasahs which were funded by Mawlānā Thānawī. He died in 1368/1949. For more biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulamā'-e Deoband*.

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Dr. 'Abd al-Ḥayy 'Ārifī[41] frequently recalled that in his last days Mawlānā Thānawī said, "By Allah's grace, I am satisfied that there will be some people left after me to perform the work [of serving the religion]." Then he mentioned the names of some *'ulamā'* and Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s name featured in that list.

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41 Dr. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ārifī was one of the disciples of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. He was a homeopathic doctor and continued to serve people until the end of his life. He wrote books and compiled the teachings of his spiritual mentor by producing a number of works. His disciples include the likes of Muftī Rafī' 'Usmānī and Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī. He also renewed the *ijāzah* or authorization of *taṣawwuf* for Mawlānā Ẓafar Aḥmad 'Uthmānī and Mawlānā Yūsuf Ludhyānwī. He died in 1406/1985. For further biographical details one may refer to his biography entitled *Sawāniḥ-o-Ta'līmāt Ḥaḍrat 'Ārifī.*

Imām al-'Aṣr 'Allāmah Sayyid Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī

AMONG MUFTĪ MUḤAMMAD SHAFĪ''S teachers, the role of *Imām al-'Aṣr* Sayyid Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī in shaping his mind and academic interests was very significant. [42] He studied numerous texts and sciences at Mawlānā Kashmīrī's feet, such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī*, modern philosophy and medicine amongst other academic disciplines. During his teaching career he also drew upon Mawlānā Kashmīrī. His face would beam with joy when *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's name was mentioned. He always spoke of him with tremendous admiration and deep love. The incidents recounted below involve both Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' and *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī.

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42 *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī is one of the greatest intellectuals in the history of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was one of the leading students of Shaykh al-Hind and was the first *Sadr Mudarris* to succeed him. He had mastered many religious and secular disciplines, and even taught modern philosophy to his students, including Muftī Shafī' 'Uthmānī. After teaching at Deoband, he moved to Dābhel and taught there. His students include Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī, Mawlānā Badr-e-'Ālam Mīrathī, Mawlānā Manāzir Aḥsan Gīlānī, Mawlānā Yūsuf Binnorī and Mawlānā Manzūr Nu'mānī. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, he received *ijāzah* from Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. He died in 1352/1933. For further biographical details one may refer to his biography entitled *Naqsh-i Dawām*.

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Allah had blessed *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī with an exceptional memory and astounding knowledge. This fact does not need any elaboration. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' states that he was assigned the teaching of *Mullā Ḥasan*, the textbook on logic at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband.

> During my preparation I had difficulty in grasping part of it. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was my refuge in all such instances, so I called on him. At the time he was sitting in the upstairs gallery of the library, engrossed in study. On seeing me he greeted me and asked if he could be of assistance. When I told him about my problem I thought he would call me upstairs. Instead, while seated there he asked me to read out the passage that was troubling me. He anticipated my difficulty before I could even begin to point it out. Then he explained it with clarity while still sitting there. Thus the issue was resolved for me.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' added with amazement that had this passage been from any textbook on *tafsīr*, hadith or *fiqh*, he would not have been so taken aback. What was remarkable was that the passage was from a book on logic, which he had glanced at years before. The clarity of his explanation showed how well even that book was preserved in his memory.

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He told us that one day while discussing an issue arising in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, he quoted a long passage from *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*[43] so fluently that the students thought the book was open in front of him. He told the amazed students, "O ignorant ones! Do you think I studied this passage last night for this lecture? Actually, I had

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43 The most popular commentary of the famous book of Ḥanafī *fiqh al-Hidāyah*. This commentary was written by Shaykh Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Siwasī; most often referred to as Ibn al-Humām. He died in 861/1457.

thoroughly studied *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* a few years ago at a library in Tonk. Since then this passage has been engraved on my memory."

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He related:

> Once *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī fell ill and his illness became prolonged. One day at *fajr* a rumour arrived that he had died. So after the *fajr* prayer we all rushed to his house, struck by this news. *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī was also with us. On reaching there we discovered that it had only been a rumour. However, he was in acute pain. When we called on him, we found him sitting on his prayer mat, with an open book on the pillow. He was poring over that book in dim light. It was a matter of both surprise and concern for us, because such hard work could aggravate his illness. Having gathered the courage, *'Allāmah* 'Usmānī asked him, "There seems to be nothing that is outside of your knowledge. Even if some new issue has arisen, why must you address right now? Surely, it could have been deferred for a few days. Or if it were really so urgent, you could easily have asked any one of us to look into it, we are all at your service. We would have provided you with a summary. It is unbearable for your servants that you undergo such hardships at this stage." In response to this, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī started looking sympathetically and innocently towards Mawlānā 'Usmānī, saying, "Brother, you are right. However, studying books is an illness. How can I get this illness cured?"

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'Allāmah Kashmīrī was so devoted to his academic pursuits that he had no idea of worldly matters. Dealing with mundane issues was beyond. Since his colleagues and students knew his nature, they took care of all of his domestic affairs. One day while he was sitting in the mosque, someone informed him that the roof of his room had collapsed. The person thought that this news would shock *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. However, he did not move an inch and

innocently replied, "What can I do? Inform Mawlānā Ḥabīb [the Chancellor of the Dār al-'Ulūm]." Accordingly, he was informed and he got it repaired.

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' stated that Allah had granted *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī knowledge of all disciplines. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī used to say, "If I want I can easily imitate the writings of such an accomplished master as Ḥarīrī[44] and write better prose than Zamakhsharī[45] and Jurjānī.[46] However, there are two works that I cannot even copy; these are *al-Hidāyah*[47] and *Gulistān*.[48]

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Allāmah Kashmīrī remarked that Zamakhsharī and Jurjānī, both disabled, were masters of rhetoric; however, even they had not touched on certain aspects of this discipline.

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Not only did *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī identify and elucidate academic is-

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44 Abū Muḥammad Qāsim ibn 'Alī al-Ḥarīrī was an Imam in the field of *balāghah* or Arabic rhetoric. He was the author of *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, which is taught as part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī syllabus. According to popular opinion, he died in 515/1121.

45 *'Allāmah* Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar Jār Allāh az-Zamakhsharī was an Imam in the field of *balāghah*. He was the author of *Asās al-Balāghah* and the famous *tafsīr* entitled *al-Kasshāf*. Even though he has been criticised for his theological heterodoxy, his status in the field of *balāghah* has been accepted and his *tafsīr* is widely used. He died in 583/1187. For a brief biography in Urdu, one may refer to Mawlānā Ibn al-Ḥasan 'Abbāsī's *Matā'-i Waqt aur Karwān-i 'Ilm*.

46 Shaykh Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī was an Imam in the field of *balāghah*. His most famous books in the field are *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and *Asrār al-Balāghah*. He is also the author of the Arabic grammar primer *Sharḥ Mi'at 'Āmil* which is taught as part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī. According to popular opinion, he died in 471/1078. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Ḥalāt-i Musannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

47 *Al-Hidāyah* is the last Ḥanafī *fiqh* book to be taught as part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī. The name of the author was Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī Bakr al-Marghīnānī. According to some historians, he died in 593/1197. For further biographical details one may refer to *Ḥalāt-i Musannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

48 *Gulistān* is the famous book of the Persian Sufi poet Shaykh Sa'dī Shīrāzī.

sues in his lectures, but he also raised the character of his students. One day he told his them, "This world was never the goal of our learning; we only used to study matters of religion. Because you have failed to grasp this, both the worlds have been lost."

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According to *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, Imam Rāzī's *at-Tafsīr al-kabīr* brings out sharply the coherence of the Qur'an, and there is no doubt that he was somewhat inclined towards the rational sciences. For this reason some even allege that his *tafsīr* contains everything except *tafsīr*. However, an objective study of it reveals that it is exceptionally successful in identifying coherence in the Qur'ān, which he has studied thoroughly. Some may disagree with him on certain issues, but his *tafsīr*, on the whole, is brilliant. Rāzī does, nonetheless, cite obscure hadith in his work, which underscores his extensive grounding in that discipline.

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' often mentioned that *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī did not let anyone indulge in backbiting in his presence. When someone was about to speak ill of anyone, he sternly cut him short, saying, "There is no need to say anything further." This ruled out any mischief.[49]

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' quoted *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī saying,

> The correctness of all four juristic schools—Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī and Hanbalī—means that their Imams will be rewarded by Allah for their deductions and because the people can follow them. As to the truth, it is represented only by one and there is no mechanism to ascertain it. As the institution of Prophethood

49 To learn about the nature, rulings and exceptions pertaining to backbiting, one may refer to the Urdu work of *'Allāmah* Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Lukhnawī entitled *Ghībat Kyā Hai?*

has come to an end, this truth cannot be unveiled in this world. However, it may be declared in the next world. Nonetheless, in my opinion, Allah will not divulge it there either: for it seems that Allah's mercy would not deem any of these four masters to be guilty of error, because they had arrived at their divergent rulings in a spirit of scrupulousness and sincere devotion to Allah. They had served Islam in their own ways. Allah will not humiliate any of them on the Day of Judgement. I therefore believe that the true position will not be declared even in the next world.

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Allah decreed that the last phase of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's life was to be devoted to the refutation of Qādiānism.[50] He felt very concerned about the growing menace of Qādiānism, so he dedicatedly combatted it. He even trained a team of his students for this mission. Through their speeches and writings they tackled this threat across the country. The prominent members of this team were Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', Mawlānā Badr-e 'Ālam Muhājir Madanī[51] and Mawlānā Muḥammad Idrīs Kāndhlawī.[52]

The achievements of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī and his team on

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50 For further details regarding Qādiānism, one may refer to Shaykh Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī an-Nadawī's *Qadianism: A Critical Study*.

51 Mawlānā Badr 'Ālam Mīrathī Muhājir Madanī was one of the leading students of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. He was the compiler of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's Arabic commentary of al-Bukhārī entitled *Fayḍ al-Bārī* and the author of *Tarjumān as-Sunnah*. He received *khilāfah* from Qārī Isḥāq Mīrathī, a *khalīfah* of Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān 'Uthmānī. He died in 1358/1939. For further biographical details one may refer to *Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Ki 50 Mithālī Shaksīyāt aur Akābir-i 'Ulamā'-i Deoband*.

52 Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī was a student of *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī. He was a graduate of both Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm Sahāranpūr and Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was a fellow student of hadith alongside Qārī Ṭayyab and Muftī Shafī'. He was appointed as the *Shaykh at-Tafsīr* (teacher of Qur'ānic exegesis) in Deoband. After the partition of India, he became the *Shaykh al-hadīth* and *tafsīr* of Jāmi'a Ashrafiya, Lahore. He wrote a number of works of an intellectual nature, including a famous *sīrah* and *tafsīr*.

this front are documented in Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī's[53] article in a special issue of the magazine *al-Balāgh*. The following incidents are related to this mission.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' told us on a number of occasions that thanks to *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's hard work, the Muslims of Qādiān managed to hold their programme every year. Once we attended the event with him. Whilst there we saw him sitting in a sombre mood after the *fajr* prayer, so we expressed our concern for him and he replied, "I am fine. Yet, this thought preoccupies me day and night: in our lectures and writings we tend to propagate the excellence of the Ḥanafī school; however, the real threats are atheism and Qādiānism. As to the differences between the Ḥanafī and Shafi'ī schools, these are, at most, related to preferences and priority. These differences will not be an issue on the Day of Judgement. In contrast, the mischiefs of Qādiānism and atheism have been striking at the roots of our Islamic beliefs. This is what makes me sad."[54]

He died in 1394/1974. For further biographical details one may refer to *Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Kī 50 Mithālī Shaksīyāt* and *Akābir-i 'Ulamā' Deoband*.

53 Mawlānā Yusūf Ludhyānwī was a *khalīfah* of Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Zakarīyya Kāndhlawī. He was appointed in 1974 as the head of Majlis-i Taḥaffuẓ-i Khatm-i Nubūwwat, an organisation dedicated to defending the creed of the finality of the Prophethood of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He was assassinated in the year 2000. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband*.

54 Muftī Muhammad Shafī'has included this also in his book *Waḥdat-i Ummat*. Almost the same version features in Mawlānā Manzūr Nu'mānī's *Ḥayāt-i Anwar*.

'Allāmah Kashmīrī had pressed home the above point with the fervour of a true believer. However, it is both regrettable and intriguing that far from appreciating the spirit permeating his assertion, some people have misquoted it for sectarian reasons. Yet, his observation seeks to extirpate sectarianism from the Muslims. Furthermore, it is outrageous that some people misinterpret these words to mean that in his last days *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī had disavowed his allegiance to Ḥanafīsm. How deplorable is this! What *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī meant was that, while the Muslim community was faced with the dangers of disbelief and atheism, everyone should focus on these. In such circumstances, it would be both unwise and a waste of time to engage in sectar-

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The first legal case in which the court declared Qādiānis to be non-Muslims was in Bhawalpur. Qādiānis had fully exerted themselves in their defence during the course of the court hearing.

When *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī learnt that such a case was in progress, he planned to go there in person and he selected a team to accompany him. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was a member of this team, but during his stay in Bhawalpur he received a telegram from Deoband, asking him to return at the earliest opportune moment in light of his father's failing health. He took the telegram to *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. It was a very difficult decision for my father to make. He was supposed to return home immediately in view of the above message, but he was equally concerned about abandoning his commitment to *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī during such an important mission. He believed that, on reading the telegram, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī would grant him leave to return home due to the fact that our elders are sensitive about these issues. However, after being informed about the message, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī confidently said, "We will pray for your father. Allah willing, he will recover. You should continue your work without any worry." Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' recalls that *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's reply replaced all of his worries with a blessed tranquility. Then *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī sent this telegram to Deoband: "The services of Mawlawī Muḥammad Shafī' are much needed. I have therefore kept him here. We have all been praying for your recovery." By Allah's grace, Mawlānā Yāsīn recovered well.

During his evidence in court, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī displayed his astounding knowledge. It cast a spell on all those present in court. Even the judge was transfixed by him. Those assigned to record

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ian debates. It is the height of injustice that his above statement is twisted to imply that he had recanted his Ḥanafism or that he had withdrawn his endorsement for the Ḥanafī school in his lectures and juristic rulings. (Muḥammad Taqī 'Uthmānī).

the proceedings neglected their task, as they too watched *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī in amazement. When it was over, the judge pointed out that since his statement was not recorded, a written version should be submitted the next day.

On returning from court the issue as to who would draft the written version of the deposition was discussed by *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, Mawlānā Murtaẓā Ḥasan[55] and others. The assignment was given to Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' at *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's insistence. He reacted by saying, "I cannot write anything worthy of you. Nonetheless, I will produce the draft as a matter of duty." *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī told him, "We will pray for you. You should commence after mentioning the name of Allah." He did not get an opportunity to draft it during the day. However, he started it that evening and continued writing throughout the night: "I was still writing at the time of the *fajr adhan*. It was then that *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī came into my room, to enquire about my progress." When he learnt that by Allah's grace it had been completed, he prayed for Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' from the depths of his heart, because he knew that he had been awake the whole night. He said that he still cherished *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's prayers for him and he regarded these as his most invaluable asset.[56]

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55 Mawlānā Murtaẓā Ḥasan Chāndpūrī was *mujāz-i suhbat* or an associate disciple of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī and a graduate of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was known for debating and wrote a number of polemical books. He died in 1371/1951 and his library of 8,000 manuscripts and books was donated to Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. For further biographical details one may refer to *Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Kī 50 Mithālī Shakhsīyāt* or *Akābir-i 'Ulamā'-e Deoband*.

56 It is hardly fitting that the present author should be mentioned alongside the great luminaries who are the deserving subjects of this book. However, I must recount for the record that the 1973 mass movement on the issue of the finality of Prophethood was headed by *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's renowned student and one of the great hadith scholars of the day *'Allāmah* Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī. When this issue featured in the National Assembly and Mirzā Nāṣir, the Qādiāni chief, submitted his statement, *'Allāmah* Binnorī summoned me to Rāwalpindī to draft a statement.

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In another incident frequently related by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' — apparently in the context of the refutation of Qādiānism—*'Allāmah* Kashmīrī visited Lahore, accompanied by *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uṣmānī and himself. Mihr and Sālik were the two reputed journalists of the day in Punjab. They had greatly publicised *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's visit, saying that it seemed like the showering of knowledge and gnosis on Lahore. They visited *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī and during the course of their conversation the issue of interest (*ribā*) came up for discussion. Mawlānā Sālik asked *'Allāmah* 'Usmānī the reasons for the prohibition of conventional interest. The latter gave his reply. However, the former kept raising queries. Notwithstanding *'Allāmah*'s detailed replies he continued to put forward objections. He appeared to endorse the viewpoint that if interest was declared lawful, it would perhaps help the Muslims.

All the while, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was present. His practice was not to speak too much, nor to make a display of his erudition. He therefore let *'Allāmah* 'Usmānī respond. However, as the discussion prolonged, he decided to interfere, addressing Mawlānā Sālik frankly and firmly,

> Brother Sālik, you are a *sālik* (seeker of truth) while I am a *majdhūb* (a person given to spiritual ecstasy), so please do not

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At that time my father, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', was bedridden. He naturally did not want me to be away at that time. However, be happily granted me leave to travel for this mission. Within a few hours I reached Rāwalpindī and started work under *'Allāmah* Binnorī's direction. One part of the statement was to be drafted by me and another by Mawlānā Samī' al-Ḥaqq. The deadline for submission was approaching fast, so we both worked hard for a week. One night I did not even get a minute's sleep. When *'Allāmah* Binnorī discovered this, he showered me with prayers. The next day he rang my father and told him, "I am reminded of the legal proceedings of Bhawalpur. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī had summoned you, while I have summoned Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī. You had remained awake throughout the night drafting the statement, and last night he, too, did not sleep at all."

mind what I say. The truth is that the Fire created by Allah is vast. If one is intent upon ending up there, how can we prevent it? And there is more than enough space. However, if he wants us to facilitate his entry there, we will certainly do the contrary.

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At *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's behest, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' wrote a few books in Urdu and Arabic refuting Qādiānism. Mawlānā Muḥammad Ashraf Khān[57] and Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī have paid tribute to these works.

One of his books in Arabic is *at-Taṣrīḥ bimā tawātara fī nuzūl al-Masīḥ.*[58] *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī had intended in this work to compile a selection of the hadiths which establish the belief of the Messiah's advent towards the end of time. He had previously collected some material and taken notes. However, owing to his other preoccupations he could not produce this book. He handed over his notes to Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', asking him to produce a book in Arabic, based on these. With utmost devotion he took up this task and within a few days he had completed it. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' mentioned that during the writing of this book, as he carried many books from the library and passed by *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, it greatly pleased the latter. When he presented his manuscript to him, he showered prayers upon him and told those present, "Look at him. While the hard work is done by me, he gets all the divine reward."

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My father remarked that although Urdu was not *'Allāmah*

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57 Mawlānā Muāammad Ashraf Khān was the chairman of the Arabic department at Peshawar University, Pakistan. He received *khilāfah* from *'Allāmah* Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, whom he wrote extensively upon in the three-volume *Sulūk-i Sulaymānī*. He also was active in the work of *Tablīgh* in the time of Ḥaḍratjī Mawlānā Yūsuf and Ḥaḍratjī Mawlānā In'am al-Ḥasan. For more details one may refer to *Tabṣiray*.

58 This book has been published in Arabic with the footnotes of the famous Aleppo scholar Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah.

Kashmīrī's mother tongue, he enjoyed mastery over its idioms and usage. He used to recite fitting Urdu couplets in his lectures. Whenever he used to comment upon an issue of rhetoric, he would say, "This is a matter of taste. And this taste has now died."

Once he recited an Urdu poem by a Hindu poet which relates the mutual differences among the Muslims during 'Alī's caliphate. It may be paraphrased thus:

One day, a man asked Sayyiduna Murtadha ﷺ
"O deputy of the Honourable Messenger (may you live long)

It was peace that reined during the times of Abu Bakr ﷺ *and 'Umar* ﷺ
And so was this cup brimming in the reign of 'Uthmān ﷺ

Why, then, did these rifts occur in your time?
The mind is at a loss in comprehending this!"

He replied, "Do evident truths need to be asked?
We were their confidantes, and you are ours!"

I had seen 'Alī's reply in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*. However, I am unable to locate it now.

Once *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī narrated the incident related to a Hindu official in the service of Awrangzeb Alamgir, whereby the former had embezzled public money. He was sentenced to having his eyes were gouged. On the occasion of his punishment the official composed a Persian couplet which is remarkable for its literary merits, in which he regrets his greed and this imminent punishment:

Several times I admonished this woeful soul
(that) It should not engage in unbecoming acts

The ungrateful soul did not heed my advice
And, ultimately, it could not even see the unseeable

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' quoted another Persian couplet cited by *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī:

The beauty of the beloved is a provocative truth, and hence,
Our existence is nothing but a lie of convenience.

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My father used to say that under the subtle influence of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī he and some other students were constantly engaged in study. After completing his formal education Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' spent a whole year studying privately. His only other pre-occupation was the delivery of some lectures at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He would enter the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband library in the afternoons. Often the librarian locked him inside and went away; and during those long hours he kept studying.

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Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī[59] used to say that Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was always among *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's favourites. He was never irked by him. This happened at a time when the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband teachers were divided into two camps. This divide culminated in *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's resignation. In that turbulent period Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was in the camp that opposed *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, and it was represented by Mawlānā Thānawī, Mawlānā Aṣghar and Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān.

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59 Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī was arguably the leading student of *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī. He travelled with his teacher to Dābhel and was appointed as the *Shaykh al-Ḥadīth* there. He also founded one of the leading Islamic seminaries in Pakistan: *Madrasah 'Arabīyyah Islāmiyyah*, 'Allāmah Binnorī Town. His most famous book was *Ma'ārif as-Sunan*, a partial Arabic commentary of Tirmidhī based on the teachings of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. He was also *mujāz-i ṣuḥbah* of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī and one of the most prominent members in the Khatm-i Nubūwwat movement. He died in 1397/1977 and his funeral prayer was led by Dr. 'Abd al-Ḥayy 'Ārifī. For more biographical details one may refer to *Nuqūsh-i Raftagān*.

Notwithstanding his difference of opinion with *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī he kept visiting him as his junior. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, too, treated him with the same affection and love.

Mawlānā Binnorī adds, "I vividly recall that during that period Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had brought a present for *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī, which he gladly accepted."

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' told me on several occasions that Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband teachers and students had established a literary society called "Nādiat al-Adab" for mastering Arabic poetry and prose. The sessions were held every Thursday and were chaired by *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. Teachers and students were invited to compose odes and panegyrics on set topics. He added that once he did not get time to compose any couplets. In haste, however, he composed seven or eight couplets in Arabic which *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī greatly appreciated.

تعزّ فإن الصبر بالحرّ أجمل

ترحّل عنّي الصبر يوم ترحّلوا   فبتُّ بقلب في الحشا يتململ

يقول نصيحي في هواه توجّعاً   تعزّ فإن الصبر بالحرّ أجمل

يصبّرني؟ والصبر عن شكيتي!   وما غالني في الحب إلا التجمّل

بكينا فأبكينا ولا مثل ناقف   لحنظلة في الحي يوم تحمّلوا[60]

60 This carries an allusion to Imrā' al-Qays' famous couplet: كأني غداة البين يوم تحمّلوا لدى سمرات الحي ناقف حنظل Even these couplets composed by Muftī Muhammad in haste underscore his acumen. One of the couplets is reflective of his command over the Arabic language and usage.

Mawlānā Sayyid Aṣghar Ḥusain

Mawlānā Sayyid Aṣghar Ḥusain was a prominent teacher who shaped the intellectual inclinations of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', whose own father and teacher Mawlānā Yāsīn, used to say that Mawlānā Aṣghar was a born saint. In Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband he was popularly known as "Ḥaḍrat Miyān ṣāḥib." Even in his childhood he did not tell a lie. In school students used to get up to pranks but he always kept out of it. Whenever he committed any lapse, he immediately put his hand up to it.[61]

Miyān Ṣāḥib was Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s teacher. They were later business partners in a bookshop. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s personal matters were intimately tied up with Mawlānā Ḥusain from childhood through to old age. He used to quote from

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61 Mawlānā Sayyid Aṣghar Ḥusain, or Miyān ṣāḥib, was a teacher of Abū Dāwūd in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He graduated from the Dār al-'Ulūm in 1320/1902, after studying under the likes of Shaykh al-Hind, Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān 'Uthmānī, Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad Qāsmī and Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān 'Uthmānī. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, he had received *khilāfah* from Miyān Jī Munnā Shāh and Ḥajī Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī. Miyān Ṣāḥib was particularly known for his piety and consideration of others. He died in 1364/1944. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband.*

his extraordinary stories; it would be difficult to find anyone to compare with him in this age. Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ may have been the only one who was aware of these anecdotes. However, another of his sons, Mawlānā Zakī Kayfī,[62] wrote an article on Miyān ṣāḥib that was published in the magazine *al-Balāgh* (Rabīʿ I 1387/1967). Below are some of the incidents cited in the article and others, which were not included.

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One day Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ and Zakī Kayfī called on him after the *maghrib* prayer. He offered them mangoes, which Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ gladly accepted. He brought two baskets, one full of mangoes and the other one empty for throwing away the seeds and skin. When they had finished, Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ took the waste basket for disposal outside. Miyān ṣāḥib asked him whether he knew what he was doing. Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ replied that it was a simple job, which did not require any training. Miyān ṣāḥib, however, taking away the basket said, "This is a craft which needs to be learnt."

He separated the skin from the seeds and then he went outside and placed them at particular spots. On being asked about this he explained that many poor people lived nearby, who would be reminded of their poverty at the sight of a large heap of mango skins and seeds near his house, and he did not wish to be responsible for their feelings of discomfort. Therefore, he spread them out in small quantities at various spots, putting the skin at those spots which were frequented by cattle, so that these would be utilized well. As for the seeds, he placed them at a spot from which the poor children could pick and eat them, after roasting them. He thus explained that this apparently waste material consisting of

62 Mawlānā Zakī Kayfī was a publisher, businessman, successful poet and political activist. He also had given *bayʿah* to Mawlānā Thānawī. He died in 1395/1975. For further biographical details one may refer to *Nuqūsh-i Raftagān*.

mango skins and seeds represents a divine bounty which should not be wasted.

It should be made clear that Miyān ṣāḥib perhaps hardly ate any mango. He offered these to his guests and the poor children of his neighbourhood. Even then he avoided placing heaps of mango skins and seeds near his house lest it might hurt them. Some jurists recommend that eating out should be avoided, for it is witnessed by the poor; and as they cannot afford it, this spectacle may hurt them. A devout person thinks of Allah even while doing mundane things, and is always conscious of his obligations.

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Miyān ṣāḥib took very little of the food sent to him by his family. He used to offer it to the poor children of his neighbourhood. Any leftover meat was put on a wall for stray cats, and bread crumbs for birds and ants. He genuinely appreciated Allah's provision and did it justice. Today we just throw away leftover food, which cannot be used by anyone. With a little more care, we too could help to feed the poor.

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He was a role model in terms of discharging his duties and being considerate towards his relatives, friends and neighbours. His house was made of mud, which needed reinforcement every year. While doing so he had to take out all of his household items. On one occasion Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' told him that he was going to too much trouble and expense every year and that, in fact, he could have had a proper cement house built with the money he had spent on reinforcing the mud house. He did not dismiss his idea outright, as he appreciated it as a sincere suggestion. Nonetheless, he asked, "Do you imagine we have grown so old without ever having thought of this?" He briefly explained how he could easily save on this expenditure, and within five years have a proper house built instead. However, after a silence, he added

that his neighbours, also, have mud houses, and he did not want something for himself that would be a constant reminder to them of their lesser fortune in life.

It was then that one realized the exceptional refinement of his moral sensibilities. The motives behind the actions of such individuals are rarely the most obvious ones. One could not imagine the deep concern that Miyān ṣāḥib had for his neighbours and the poor. He continued living in the same mud house, and only when his neighbours built cement houses, did he do the same.

He, undoubtedly, emulated the model of the early Muslims. It is recorded in the history books that once, during Caliph 'Umar's reign, the price of ghee went up. 'Umar ﷺ announced that he would have ghee only when the common people of Madīnah could afford it. This is the standard of conduct that was reflected in Miyān ṣāḥib's behaviour throughout his life; a life filled with selflessness, empathy and consideration for the feelings of others.

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Miyān Ṣāḥib had serious differences on political matters with a leading religious figure of the day and he expressed it publicly. Yet, if anyone showed any disrespect towards that figure, he sternly warned the offender. His divergence of opinion was in keeping with the saying, "the differences of the *Ummah* are a blessing." In fact, he never exceeded the limits in differing with anyone.

The same scholar with whom he had differences announced that he would lead a special prayer for rain in view of the impending drought. Through intuition, perhaps, Miyān Ṣāḥib knew that there would not be any rain during that period, and yet, he asked Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' to accompany him to it. The prayer was duly performed, but it failed to yet it did not rain. That scholar announced the prayer for the next day. Again, he joined the prayer; yet there was no rain. The prayer was fixed for the next day and Miyān Ṣāḥib asked permission to lead the prayer on that day. This

request surprised everyone because he did not even lead the obligatory prayers. Anyway, he led that prayer and his admirers were confident that it would rain. Yet the sun shone brightly, with no cloud in sight. Everyone returned home dejected and sad. When Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' asked him why he had led the prayer on that occasion when he did not lead the daily prayers, he replied,

> I did it so that people would not belittle that scholar. I deliberately led the prayer, though I knew intuitively that it would not rain. No *walī* is to be blamed if it does not rain, but I did not want him to be discredited on this count. So, I deliberately led the prayer so that if there were any defamation, then the scholar would not be alone.

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Miyān Ṣāḥib had a special ability to draw lessons from everyday life. His house was at some distance from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, in the locality of Qila. He used to come to the Dār al-'Ulūm from there, which meant he had to cross some woods on the way. After arriving at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband he used to sit with Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' in the room known as *Dār al-Tadrīs wa'l-Ishā'at*, which was a publishing house. Before and after his classes he also used to sit there.

One day, on arrival, he told Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' that he had witnessed an instructive spectacle. As he turned to him attentively, he told him,

> Outside Kotlā locality I saw some young girls sitting in the woods. They were fighting among themselves, hitting one another. On enquiry, I learnt that they had collected some dung and they were fighting over the shares. Each one of them wanted to have a larger share than the others. At first, I laughed at the bone of their contention. While I was trying to stop them from fighting, it struck me that all worldly glory, including kingship,

> is no more than this heap of dung. Those fighting over worldly goods are no better than these foolish young girls. As compared to the eternal bounties of the next life, all worldly things are no more than this pile of dung.

In one hadith the Prophet ﷺ has likened the world to a dead animal and those lusting after it are dogs.[63] We all come across these happenings everyday. However, unlike Miyān Ṣāḥib, we rarely possess the vision and insight to draw these lessons.

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One day, Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ called on him after the *maghrib* prayer. On such occasions, the two used to sit together until *ʿishā'* time. That day he said something unusual, namely, that they would speak only in Arabic. Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ did not dare ask for the reason and he initiated the conversation in Arabic. Miyān Ṣāḥib replied in Arabic, too. However, since neither of them were fluent in Arabic, they exchanged only a few sentences, comprising only essential points. It took them five minutes to say in Arabic what it would have taken them one minute to say in Urdu. As a result, their session ended early on that day. At that point Miyān Ṣāḥib pointed out,

> Look! Each and every minute of our life is precious. Such invaluable time should not be wasted on trivial or useless talk. I asked you to speak only in Arabic because I knew that we would then be limited to essential matters. Our metaphor is that of a very rich man who has a large treasure in coins, and who spends them lavishly. However, by the time the coins begin to run out, he becomes extremely parsimonious in his spending; in fact, he avoids spending anything at all. Allah has granted

63 Please note that according to al-ʿAjlūnī in *Kashf al-Khafā'* (Hadith no.1313) this hadith has been declared a fabrication. However, he says that the meaning is true.

us plenty of time, which we have wasted. Now in the last stage of our lives, while our treasure is about to be exhausted, we should be most particular as to how we spend every moment.

All these incidents are related by Mawlānā Zakī Kayfī in his article. The following additional accounts were supplied by his father, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'.

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had started a small publishing house at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband.[64] He had a large family to support and his salary from the madrasah was meager. His other objective was to get his writings widely circulated. However, business calls for special skills which Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had not yet acquired at this early stage. He recalls,

> Once I went to Delhi and bought a bulk quantity of a new edition of *Ḥamā'il Sharīf*. I thought I had got them at a low price and had thus struck a good bargain. On reaching Deoband I mentioned it first to Miyān Ṣāḥib. He admired my deal and asked me to give him all of them at a higher price. I complied with his instruction and handed over to him all of the copies at the agreed price, which he then paid to me. I was still under the impression that I had struck a good bargain, which was clearly appreciated by such an experienced person as Miyān Ṣāḥib.
>
> After a while I visited his library and found all the copies intact. It seemed to me that he had not sold even a single copy. In surprise I asked him about this. His reply to me revealed his extraordinary level of *adab* (spiritual courtesy): "Let me now tell you the truth. The edition you bought was littered with mistakes and you had paid an exorbitant price for them. I knew

64 For further details around this publishing house, one may refer to *Ḥayāt-i Muftī-i A'ẓam*.

they could never have been commercially viable, but had I told you all this at the time it would have demoralised you; so that is why I bought all the copies."

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When Mawlānā Zakī Kayfī wrote the article on Miyān Ṣāḥib for publication in *al-Balāgh* magazine, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' went through it and added the following:

My son Mawlawī Muḥammad Zakī has presented an account of Miyān Ṣāḥib based on reports he had heard from me; I appreciate his recording of these narrations. Yet these do not provide even a glimpse of the accomplishments of his genius and his unique way of life. This article has transported me back to the good old days and I am filled with nostalgia for them. I was reminded of Miyān Ṣāḥib's face glowing with sincerity and his priceless words. It also reminded me of old incidents, but I do not have time to write them down. Therefore, I will conclude by citing one of his letters that best reflects his lively and profound style of writing.

He had given me his publishing house at a nominal price. I was to pay this amount in easy monthly instalments. In his last days he had gone to Kasaulī, a hill station for medical treatment; and it was there that I sent him the instalments. In reply he sent me the following letter: "I received your gift, which is both the best and worst of things. How can I thank you for the favours you do for me everyday? I pray for you and look forward to your prayers for me during my life and after my death." This brief letter of his encompasses a whole world of meanings and profound thoughts. He had done me a huge favour by letting me pay in easy instalments. Yet, he speaks of it as my favour to him; even referring to it as a gift. More importantly, in his pithy Arabic, he lays bare the true nature of money in one sen-

tence. At one level, money is no doubt the most precious thing in this world, for it helps one to acquire the things one wants. On another level, it is a dangerous thing, for it causes discord between husband and wife and between father and son; it even prompts men to murder. In conclusion, he draws attention to the remembrance of death at all times. Accordingly, he asks that prayers be made for him. All praise is due to Allah and it is He who rewards. (*al-Balāgh*, Rabīʿ II 1387/1967)

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Below is part of the foreword by Miyān Ṣāḥib that adorns Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ's book *Sīrat Khātim al-Anbiyā'*[65]:

> Mawlawī Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ, a young teacher and scholar of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, grew up before my eyes. However, in view of his impeccable scholarly credentials I speak highly of him as Mawlānā. His writings in Arabic and Urdu have emerged at a pace which makes an old man like me envious of him. Allah has blessed him in both languages with eloquence and flair. More remarkably, while modernity has dazzled many, he has maintained the ways and values of his mentors and elders. He successfully strives to protect people from falling into the pit falls of modern fashions. I pray heartily for him whenever I see a new publication from him.

65 This book has been translated into English: *Seerah of the Final Messenger*, and has been published by the Islamic Dawah Council UK.

Mawlānā Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān

Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān features prominently among the teachers and mentors of Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ.[66] Apart from being a student of Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān, he was also a distant relative; Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān was the brother of Shaykh al-Islām Mawlānā Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUsmānī and Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān, Chancellor of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. He was a *murīd* (follower) of Mawlānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn in terms of spirituality and graduated from Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband in 1297/1880. Mawlānā Gangohī invested him with *khilāfah* in *taṣawwuf*. In 1299/1882 he took up teaching at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband in an honorary capacity. In 1310/1892, when the Dār al-Iftāʾ became an independent

66 Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī was a brother of *ʿAllāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmānī and Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī. He studied mainly under Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī and Mawlānā Yaʿqūb Nānotawī. He was appointed by Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī as the first Chief Muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. His fatwas have been published in more than ten volumes. He was a disciple of the second *Muhtamim* of the Dār al-ʿUlūm, Mawlānā Shāh Rafīʿ ad-Dīn of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. His students include Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī, Mawlānā Manāzir Aḥsan Gīlānī and Qārī Ṭayyab. He died in 1347/1928. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i ʿUlamā-i Deoband*.

department, he was appointed Muftī. For thirty-five years he performed the important duty of Muftī at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had studied *al-Mishkāt*[67] and *al-Jalālayn*[68] at his feet. When he was assigned the duty of formulating juristic rulings, he did so under Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān's supervision for a long time. Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān had been granted license to teach *al-Ḥiṣn al-Ḥaṣīn*[69] by Shāh Faḍl ar-Raḥmān Ganj Murādābādī.[70] He thus held a high position among ḥadith scholars. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had studied *al-Ḥiṣn al-Ḥaṣīn*, word by word, with Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān and secured permission from him to teach the same through the following chain of authority: "This license comes from Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān through Mawlānā Faḍl ar-Raḥmān Ganj Murādābādī, Shāh Muḥammad Isḥāq and Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, Shāh Walīullāh, Shaykh Abū Ṭāḥir Madanī, Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Kurdī, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qashāshi, Shaykh Abū 'l-Mawāhib Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Quddūs ash-Shannāwī, Shaykh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ar-Ramalī, Shaykh Zakarīya al-Anṣārī, Ḥāfiẓ Taqī ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Hāshimī al-Makkī and Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Jazrī ash-Shafi'ī.[71]

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As to Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān's stature, it should be borne in mind

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67 The last secondary source of Hadith which is taught as part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī. For further details, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī.*

68 A succinct but profound *tafsīr* written by *'Allāmah* Jalāl ad-Dīn Maḥallī and *'Allāmah* Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī, and which is taught as part of the Dars-i Niẓāmī. For further details, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣanifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī.*

69 A famous book of supplications.

70 Mawlānā Faḍl-al-Raḥmān Ganj Murādābādī was a spiritual mentor of the Naqshbandi order. He studied ḥadith under Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawi amongst others. Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī also benefited from his company. He died in 1334 AH For further biographical details one may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir.*

71 *Muqaddimah Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband.*

that he held the position of chief Muftī at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband at a time when the Dār al-'Ulūm had many luminaries on its staff. Yet he was an extremely simple and modest person, as is evident from the following report narrated by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī':

> It was not easy for one to perceive Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān's accomplishments, both inward and outward. It was not for everyone to understand him, as he was a sufi master and an outstanding scholar. However, he was so humble in his ways that he used to buy groceries for the widows and elderly women of his locality and settled their accounts. If it was a heavy package, he carried it under his arm and delivered the goods to their houses.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' related that often the elderly women would complain: "Mawlawī Ṣāḥib, you have bought the wrong thing. . . and I did not ask for this amount. . . I asked for this." Upon hearing this, he would immediately go back to the market and resolve their complaints.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' shared with Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān the same trait of simple humility. Notwithstanding his exalted scholarly standing, he did menial jobs for the poor in his locality and was never shy about doing any task. Once, Shaykh al-Islam Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī affectionately told him, "Brother Mawlawi Ṣāḥib, as you are now the Muftī of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, you should think about the high position which you now hold. You should not walk about in the market carrying pots." Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' recounted that one of his teachers told Mawlānā Madanī that Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān used to behave in the same manner. Upon hearing this, Mawlānā Madanī smiled. He appreciated such simplicity. However, in view of the general decline in standards, he advised some caution.

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s description of Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān

in the introduction to his book *Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband* states: "In 1345 [1926 CE] I joined his Persian class, and so began my interaction with Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān. For twenty years I enjoyed the privilege of his company. During this long period I never saw him lose his temper with anyone. He was the embodiment of forbearance, modesty and dignity. People may have disagreed with him, but he never showed any disrespect to them. I cannot recall a reproach ever being directed at a miscreant during his sessions. One would not dream of backbiting in his presence. If someone misrepresented a fact, he politely corrected him, without explicitly refuting him.

Though he was a great scholar, he kept copies of both the text and commentary of *al-Mishkāt* on his desk out of humility. When a student raised a question, he read out the relevant passage from *al-Mirqāt*, the commentary on *al-Mishkāt*. This he did notwithstanding his mastery over the entire subject. He employed such simple language in his presentations that no one would imagine that he was such a great scholar.

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In his career as Muftī, he had issued thousands of juristic rulings, perhaps even hundreds of thousands; these were never published. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' first selected some rulings from the record of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and published them under the title *'Azīz al-Fatāwā*. This work was first serialized in the monthly magazine *al-Muftī*, which was edited by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' and published from Deoband. It was subsequently published as a four-volume work and has since been produced in a single volume edition. Later on, a project was undertaken to compile all such rulings under the title *Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband*. The first part contained the rulings by Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān. So far nine volumes of this work have been published, covering rulings up to The Book of Divorce. This work has been painstakingly com-

piled so far by Mawlānā Zafīr ad-Dīn. May Allah enable him to complete this undertaking, as it will be a source of guidance for future generations, God willing.

As to Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān's devotion to the business of issuing juristic rulings, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' states, "Some of my friends told me that prior to his death Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān was drafting a ruling. At his death the draft was found lying on his chest. May Allah reward him and all Muslims."[72]

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Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān had an overflowing love and affection for Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' and greatly appreciated his academic credentials. In his foreword to Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s book *Sīrat Khātim al-Anbiyā'* he remarks:

> I have gone through a work on the best of humanity, entitled *Awjaz as-Siyar li Khayr al-Bashar* by a discerning and sincere young scholar, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' Deobandī. I have studied it from cover to cover with keen interest. I have benefited from it and have been left greatly satisfied by the experience. As a matter of fact, it is a unique work. The author has compiled the events of the Prophet's life comprehensively and eloquently. His account is highly readable and fluent. May Allah reward him in both the worlds out of His grace and make this book popular. May Allah cause people to derive benefit from it. *Amīn*."

72 *Ibid.*

Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān, Chancellor of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband

Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ often used to speak highly of Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān. He was the *Muhtamim* of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. Due to his administrative preoccupations, his scholarly talent was rarely seen. He was gifted in both the academic and administrative fields, and was greatly blessed by Allah.[73]

According to Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ, Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān's interest in Arabic literature was remarkable. His Arabic writings were in chaste language, with stylistic charm. He was responsible for drafting the certificate of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband that is awarded to students to this day. When Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ established the Arabic literary study circle "Nādiyat al-

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73 Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī was the sixth *Muhtamim* in the history of the Dār al-ʿUlūm. Prior to that he was the deputy to Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad Qāsmī. He was known for his distinguished management style, intuition and tactful manner in dealing with difficult situations. He was a student of Shaykh al-Hind. His students include Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī and Qārī Ṭayyab. He received *khilāfah* from Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. He died in 1348/1929. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i ʿUlāma-i Deoband.*

Adab", Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān participated in its activities enthusiastically.

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Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān played a key role in developing Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s academic writing abilities. Despite his administrative engagements he kept an eye on the students and he encouraged those of them who showed potential. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' reports,

> While I was a student at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, he turned his attention to me. Even while invigilating he checked my answer sheets in the examination hall and informed others of his satisfaction with my performance.
>
> Once an article was published in a newspaper or magazine which was not in accord with the consensus view of the Muslim community. At his directive I wrote a rejoinder. This was my first published article. When I presented a copy to him, his joy was boundless. He took me straight away to Shāh Ṣāḥib, Shaykh al-Adab Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī and other teachers and proudly showed them my article.
>
> Since I had written it during my student days, it must have contained various flaws. However, his encouragement gave an impetus to my writing career. Later, I contributed several pieces to the magazine *al-Qāsim*, which was edited by him and published by Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. After completing my education I did not write anything for it for some time. This irked him. He was happy only when I presented some of my articles to him. He remarked, "I want you to devote yourself exclusively to this."

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' used to say,

> Allah had blessed Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān with such

> administrative acumen that he could have successfully held a ministerial post in government. I never saw him lose his composure, even during the worst crisis affecting Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He maintained the same self-confidence in the most adverse circumstances. He never breached the principles of the Dār al-'Ulūm in the exercise of his expediency during the course of saving the institution from loss and harm.

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Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' said,

> Allah had blessed Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān with exemplary patience and forbearance. Once, a wealthy person of Deoband owned a plot of land adjacent to Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Part of it was purchased by the Dār al-'Ulūm. After his death, one of his heirs barged into Dār al-'Ulūm and laid claim to the plot. He addressed Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān in a disrespectful manner. His provocative words no doubt infuriated Mawlānā's friends, and they were about to repay him in the same coin. However, he restrained them and told the intruder: "Shaykh Ṣāḥib, please do not get angry. Come inside and let us sort it out." However, the man kept venting his fury. After a while Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān repeated his request. Then he almost forced him to sit down in his office, and have some tea. When the man's anger had subsided, Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān produced the deeds, asserting that the conveyance had been duly executed and also entered in the state land registry. After going through the documents the man was embarrassed and was deeply appreciative of Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān's patience and self restraint.

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Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband greatly expanded during his tenure, as many new departments and units developed. Hundreds of stu-

dents stayed in the hostels. As a result, he was found working day and night. Yet he never missed any of his supererogatory prayers, Qur'an recitations or spiritual exercises. He used to recite the divine name 125,000 times everyday.

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Once there erupted a serious problem on the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband campus, directed against its officials. Some even threatened to kill Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān. Yet he insisted on sleeping alone and unprotected on an open roof. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' tried to alert him to the threat, urging him to sleep inside a closed room at least. However, he nonchalantly replied, "I am a descendant of *Sayyidunā* 'Uthmān Ghanī ﵁. There were not even four people to carry his dead body. He was buried in the darkness of night at Baqī' graveyard. So dying does not worry me at all."

Shaykh al-Adab Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī

Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ narrated the following anecdotes about Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī:[74]

"Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī took up teaching in the same year I started studying Arabic formally. I was his student in every class. Thus I enjoyed this privilege for years. In the final year I studied introductory books on Arabic, namely *Mīzān aṣ-Ṣarf* and *Nahw Mīr*.[75] Yet I had not gained any command over the Arabic language. The next year Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī took our class and taught us *Mufīd al-Ṭālibīn*.[76] In the first lecture he revised our study of grammar.

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74 Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī Amrohawī was also refered to as "Shaykh al-Adab" in light of his expertise in the field of rhetoric. He was a student of Shaykh al-Hind. After Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī's death, he was appointed as the chief Muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. He had given *bayʿah* to Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī and later received *khilāfah* from Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī. His students include Qārī Ṭayyab, Mawlānā Ḥifz ar-Raḥmān Siyuhārwī and Mawlānā Manzūr Nuʿmānī. He died in 1374/1954 after serving as a teacher for more than 50 years at Deoband. For further biographical details one may refer to *Akābir-i ʿUlāma-i Deoband*.

75 For further details about these books of Arabic grammar, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

76 *Ibid*.

He discussed each and every word and its grammatical features. Thus he helped us learn Arabic grammar thoroughly. Such was the detail of his teaching that it took us a month to go through a single page of our textbook. However, it enabled us to master the fundamentals of grammar.

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"Owing to Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī's teaching we were able to write short pieces in Arabic in the first year. Once he gave us homework which I could not complete owing to some difficulty. I submitted my unfinished work with an apology. In response he wrote an Arabic couplet on my notebook which read as follows: 'The harder you work, the higher position you will attain. One seeking heights of glory stays awake at nights.' After going through this I never again neglected my homework.

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"While I was studying *Nafaḥāt al-Yaman*[77] with Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī, I started composing couplets in Arabic. Then I composed some in Urdu. When Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī learnt of this, he told me, 'There is no point in composing couplets in Urdu. Write in Arabic!' He then gave me an assignment and I strove to compose poetry in Arabic.'

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"I studied *Maqāmāt-i Ḥarīrī* with Mawlānā Iʿzāz ʿAlī in the very year its teaching was assigned to him for the first time. We noted that he prepared his lessons at night. His scholarly presentation used to mesmerize the students. He asked his students to imitate the style of this book in their own writing. I wrote many pieces, which I kept for a long time. I have, however, misplaced them now.

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"He managed to teach a great deal of material in a relatively

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77 For further details around this book, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣanifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

short period of time. He taught us thirty parts of *Maqāmāt* thoroughly and with exercises. Then he took up the poetic works of Mutanabbī,[78] and he completed all of this within the allotted time, without any extra classes being necessary."

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When Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' started his teaching career, he immediately won acclaim as a teacher of Arabic literature. For many years he taught *Maqāmāt-i Ḥarīrī*. Even those having already graduated would continue to attend his lectures due to their immense benefit. Muḥammad Shafī' said that he owed all of this to Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' often mentioned that it was common knowledge on the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband campus that Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī always initiated a greeting; no one could surpass him in this. Occasionally, students would plan to out-do him, but they were never able to succeed.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' narrated:

> Once Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī went on a journey and I accompanied him. As we proceeded, he suggested that someone be appointed as leader of the group. When we told him that we could not even think of anyone other than him, he instructed us to obey him fully and we readily consented. However, when the time came to organise the luggage, he stopped all of us and carried everyone's luggage. When we protested, he pointed out that the command of the leader was binding on us. Throughout the journey, he always did the hard work. All our pleas were dismissed on the ground that we had pledged him obedience.

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Even after Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' moved to Pakistan, he kept

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78 For further details around Mutanabbī and his *Dīwān*, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

in touch with Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī. It was a mark of the latter's humility that the letters he wrote in reply gave the impression that they were being addressed from a youngster to his elder. In his later years Mawlānā I'zāz 'Alī thought of visiting Pakistan. On discovering this, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' asked him to take Dār al-'Ulūm Karachi as his base; he promised to do so. However, he died soon after in Deoband. *We all are from Allah and to Him is the return.*

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He made the following comments on a tract written by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' on the use of loudspeakers:

> The use of the loudspeaker is an important issue of the day. It raises questions relating to the prayer and various *'ulamā'* have been expressing divergent views, therefore, many Muslims are rightly concerned about the matter. Muftī Mawlānā Muḥammad Shafī' has produced a valuable and useful treatise on this subject. I have gone through it and prayed for him from the depths of my heart. May this work, like his other writings, be useful for both the lay people and the elite. May Allah accept it. Muḥammad I'zāz 'Alī Amrohawī.

Shaykh al-Islām 'Allāmah Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī

'ALLĀMAH SHABBĪR AḤMAD 'USMĀNĪ[79] features prominently among the *'ulamā'* with whom Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' kept company. He hardly needs any introduction; indeed, several books are available on his academic and political achievements.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had studied *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and part of *al-Hidāyah* with *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī. During his time in Dābhel, the latter fell ill. He suggested Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' as his replacement for teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. At that time he was no longer in the service of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. So he went to Dābhel and covered for *'Allāmah* Shabbīr.

79 *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī, referred to as Shaykh al-Islām, was a leading student of Shaykh al-Hind and a prominent political activist before and after the independence of India. *'Allāmah* 'Usmānī *'Allāmah* 'Usmānī also dissuaded Sulṭān Ibn Sa'ūd of Arabia from demolishing Islamic heritage sites by delivering a theological speech on the subject in Arabic. He taught ḥadith and *tafsīr* in Jāmi'ah Islāmīyyah, Dābhel, alongside *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. During his stay there, he was able to complete his *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān and write a partial commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (which was later completed by Muftī Taqī 'Usmānī). He was at one stage appointed as the *Sadr Muhtamim* or Chief Principal of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He died in 1369/1949. For further biographical details one may refer to his biographies: *Tajalliyāt-i 'Usmānī* and *Ḥayāt-i 'Usmānī*.

When *'Allāmah* Shabbīr launched the nationwide tour of India for the creation of Pakistan and established Jami'at-ul 'Ulamā'-i Islām, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' served as his right hand man during this mission. *'Allāmah* Shabbīr travelled across the country for this cause. He sent Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' to the places where he could not get to himself, and he accompanied *'Allāmah* Shabbīr on his visit to the North-West Frontier Province for the referendum.

When the movement for implementing the Islamic constitution in Pakistan was launched, *'Allāmah* Shabbīr invited my father to move to Pakistan. At his behest Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' joined the Ta'limat Islami Board, which was set up in order to draft the Islamic constitution. Until his death he consulted Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' on all issues of importance. Indeed, his funeral prayer in Pakistan was led by Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'.

'Allāmah Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī was one of the architects of Pakistan. Both Qāid-i A'zam and Nawābzādā Liāqat 'Alī Khan had brought him to Pakistan in order to assist the process; and he it was who hoisted the flag of Pakistan for the first time in Western Pakistan. Had he wished, he could have made himself extremely rich and occupied a high-ranking post. Instead, he led the life of an ascetic. He did not even secure himself a house; he lived in a rented house until he died. When he left for his heavenly abode, he did not leave behind any bank deposits, property or other assets.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' arrived in Pakistan in 1948 and he would visit *'Allāmah* Shabbīr every evening. At that time Karachi was not an academic centre, so it did not have a library; therefore, in order to check any references or resolve academic queries he would visit Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s personal library, which the present author can testify though quite young at the time, became the scene for many a lively academic discussion. The house was situated on the third floor, and notwithstanding his old age, *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī visited regularly. Allah had

blessed *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī with both literary and oratory skills. His lectures were particularly forceful and effective. Here are some of his memorable quotations on the authority of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī':

> If the truth is presented with a true intention and through true means, it does not go to waste: it has its desired effect. However, if one's speech, intention or means are not true, it will be in vain.
>
> It is a paradise in this world if spouses are God fearing and united."

'Allāmah Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī was a member of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. He used to have discussions day and night with other members regarding the Islamic constitution. Once, apparently in response to a resolution, Ghulam Muhammad, the former Governor General, sneeringly remarked, "These are matters of state. What do *'ulamā'* know about these things? They should not interfere in them." In reply *'Allāmah* Shabbīr delivered a cogent speech, one of the gems of which was, "Only the artificial barriers of A, B, C and D separate us from you. If you remove these, you would realise who possesses true knowledge and who is ignorant?"

There were those who feared that the Islamic constitution would result in the imposition of a theocracy, and on one occasion, this issue was under discussion in the Assembly. *'Allāmah* Shabbīr said, "You fear that the *Mulla* will grab power. You may rest assured that they have no such intention. They are not after power; but they, nonetheless, desire to see those in power drawn closer to the religion."

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' often quoted the following remark of *'Allāmah* Shabbīr on the topic of the home, "Everyone has three homes: physical, religious and spiritual. His physical home is his birthplace. One's religious home is Madīnah Ṭayyabah in that he

obtained the blessing of faith from there. His spiritual home is Paradise, the abode of his soul. Eventually he has to return there, after much wandering."

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' used to say that *'Allāmah* Shabbīr was a solid rock of scholarship. Allah had blessed *Ḥujjat al-Islām* Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī,[80] the founder of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, with inner knowledge. He also possessed special insights into scholasticism and philosophy, to the extent that other scholars could not even perceive the extent of his scholarship. However, two *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband contributed much to popularising Mawlānā Qāsim's scholarly legacy for the benefit of people: *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī and Mawlānā Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyab.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' related that *'Allāmah* Shabbīr, after completing his part of the commentary *Fatḥ al-Mulhim* on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, he took it to Madīnah and read it while sitting before the Prophet's grave. He placed the manuscript there and at the Multazim in Makkah and prayed: "I have written it, without any resources. O Allah, accept this and arrange for its publication." On his return he received an offer from the Niẓām of Hyderabad for its publication. Accordingly, it was published and won wide acclaim in academic circles.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' used to speak highly of the following works by *'Allāmah* Shabbīr: *Tafsīr 'Usmānī*, *Islām*, *al-'Aql wa al-Naql* and *I'jāz-i Qur'ān*. He expressed the desire that these be

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80 Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī—also referred to as *Ḥujjat al-Islām* or "Proof of Islam"—was the founder of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband in 1867. He was a great thinker and was known for his distinctive erudition in *'Ilm al-Kalām* or discursive theology. He was a disciple of Ḥajī 'Imdād Allah Muhājir Makkī. His main student was Shaykh al-Hind who is considered his successor, both in terms of his intellectual and political thought. He died in 1297/1880, at the age of 49. For further details one may refer to his biographies written by Mawlānā Manāzir Aḥsan Gīlānī, Mawlānā Nūr al-Ḥasan Rāshid Kāndhlawī and Mawlānā Anwār al-Ḥasan Sherkothī.

translated into English and requested some of his English-speaking friends to embark upon it. It is a pity that their translation was not completed in his lifetime.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' spoke of *'Allāmah* Shabbīr being a gifted public speaker. He was highly sensitive, to the extent that the slightest sense of unease was enough for him to cancel a scheduled speech.

When our polemical debate with the Qādiānis in Ferozpūr was over, the local Muslims organized a big public meeting at night. It was done in the presence of a large number of *'ulamā'* from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Among them were Shāh Ṣāḥib, Mawlānā Murtaḍā Ḥusain Khān, and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī. The aim was to raise awareness amongst the local Muslims. Although all of the above were outstanding scholars, everyone looked forward to *'Allāmah* Shabbīr's speech, because of his effect on the audience and because he had the ability to make a scholarly speech accessible to the general public.

When it was time for the meeting *'Allāmah* Shabbīr felt unwell and was not keen to speak. All the *'ulamā'* present tried to persuade him to deliver the speech anyway, but he would not oblige them. *'Allāmah* Shabbīr's decision not to speak infuriated Mawlānā Murtaḍā Ḥusain. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', however, kept quiet because he knew that *'Allāmah* Shabbīr could only speak when he felt fully at ease about doing so. Therefore, when the other *'ulamā'* were leaving, he stayed behind, telling them that he would join them later. Once left alone together for a while, he said to *'Allāmah* Shabbīr, "I know you feel a bit uneasy, but if you stay here, you may end up feeling even worse. Why don't you just attend the meeting without delivering a speech? You may feel better." His response was that people would force him into speaking. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' tried to reassure him that no one would pressure him, and that he would speak only if and

when he felt up to it. At that point he consented and went to the meeting venue, where other *'ulamā'* were already speaking. On witnessing the interest and enthusiam of the audience *'Allāmah* Shabbīr immediately felt the urge to address them and conveyed this news himself to the stage mamager. He spoke for one-and-half hours, to the immense benefit of all the listeners."

According to Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', Allah had granted *'Allāmah* Shabbīr a special ability to write. When Shaykh al-Hind founded Jamī'at-i 'Ulamā'-i Hind for the independence of India, and convened a meeting in Delhi, he was supposed to deliver the keynote address. Since he did not have time he entrusted this job to others. Several of his students attempted it, and Shaykh al-Hind was pleased by their efforts. However, he selected *'Allāmah* Shabbīr's draft. He delivered it and it was later published.[81]

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' had ties of kinship with *'Allāmah* Shabbīr. He was also his student and close associate in the Pakistan movement. As a result of this close relationship he greatly loved Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' and spoke highly of his talents. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' wrote a treatise on the two-nation theory in 1364/1945, and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr stated in a foreword to the work: "I have thoroughly studied this ruling. By Allah's grace the author has elucidated the issue, leaving no room for confusion among scholars, for he has explored every facet. May Allah grant him the best reward."

Likewise, in his foreword to Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s book *Nayl al-Ma'ārib fi 'l-Masḥ 'alā al-Jawārib* he wrote: "I have gone through the discussion on the issue of *masḥ* (wiping) over socks as part of *wuḍū'*. May Allah bless both the words and deeds of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'. His explanation is scholarly. In my opinion, his ruling is sound and valid."

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81 One may read this address and about its context in *Naqsh-i Ḥayāt*.

Shaykh Al-Islām Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī

The illustrious figure of Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī[82] does not need any introduction. Although Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was not his student, he always treated him as his teacher. While he was Muftī at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī was the head teacher and *Shaykh al-Ḥadīth*. They had frequent consultations on many issues.

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82. Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī was also referred to as Shaykh al-Islām. He was one of the leading students of Shaykh al-Hind and one the greatest teachers in the history of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. When he moved to Madinah, he also studied ḥadith under Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Shaykh Ḥasb Allāh ash-Shāfi'ī al-Mālikī and Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barzanjī. Thereafter, he was also granted the honour of teaching in Masjid an-Nabawī for a number of years. When he returned to India, he also taught in Calcutta and Sylhet before famously being appointed as the fifth *Sadr Mudarris* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. As the head of Jamiat-i 'Ulāma-i Hind, he played a pivotal role in the independence of India by working with the Congress Party. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, he was a senior *khalīfah* of Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī. Some of his disciples and students are still alive. His students that are currently based in Britain include Mawlānā Ya'qūb Kāwī Qāsmī and Mawlānā Muḥammad Bāthā. The now late Mawlānā Ismā'īl Wādī was also one of his students. Mawlānā Madanī died in 1957 and was buried in the Qāsmī graveyard of Deoband. For further biographical details one may refer to his autobiography entitled *Naqsh-i Ḥayāt* and his biography written by Barbara Metcalf.

It is common knowledge that there developed some differences among Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband *'ulamā'* on the strategy for the independence of the country. Mawlānā Thānawī and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī believed that Muslims should have a separate state; hence providing a greater possibility of implementing the Shari'ah in that state. On the other hand, Mawlānā Madanī led other *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband who took the line that the partition of the country was harmful, especially for the Muslims left behind as a minority. Prior to the creation of Pakistan the divergence of opinion between the two camps had become very intense, with both parties striving vigorously for their cause and believing their respective positions to be reflective of the correct Islamic ruling.

Since Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' endorsed the position of Mawlānā Thānawī and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī, he inevitably differed with Mawlānā Madanī. However, since both the camps were sincerely committed to the welfare of the Muslims, they maintained a mutual respect in spite of their differences. Their example serves as a role model for future generations.[83]

Notwithstanding his difference of opinion with Mawlānā Madanī, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' always spoke of him in terms of the utmost respect. It was quite a spectacle when he mentioned Mawlānā Madanī. He never referred to his differences with him without following it with a glowing tribute to his genius. Below are some of his observations regarding Mawlānā Madanī:

> When Mawlānā Madanī arrived at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband to deliver some lectures on hadith, he established 'Majlis 'Ilmī', which comprised teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband for the discussion of academic issues. Every Thursday they had their meals

83. For further details around the ethics observed at the time of this disagreement, one may refer to the aforementioned *Takmilat al-I'tidāl fi Marātib ar-Rijāl.*

> sent there from their respective homes. The sessions were very interesting and enlightening, for they drew upon one another's expertise. Mawlānā Madanī was the moving spirit behind it.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' said,

> I can never forget the immense favour that Mawlānā Madanī conferred on me by drawing my attention to the study of hadith, and he insisted that I teach hadith. Prior to this I had taught many subjects at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, including *tafsīr* and *fiqh*. However, I had not had an opportunity to teach hadith. When Mawlānā Madanī was staying in Sylhet and he needed a hadith teacher, he sent me a letter inviting me to take up that position. I apologized on the grounds that by then I had not taught hadith at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He asked me how this had happened, for he regarded its teaching as essential for a scholar. After arriving in Deoband he asked me again to teach hadith. I replied that since *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī taught hadith at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, I had no chance. Yet he asked me to teach at least one hadith collection and persisted repeatedly. Eventually, I was asked to teach Imām Mālik's *Muwaṭṭa'* at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Later, I taught other hadith collections.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' often said that people usually took Mawlānā Madanī's political activities as his major achievement. Allah had, however, blessed him with an extensive period of companionship with Shaykh al-Hind. He had devoted himself fully to Shaykh al-Hind with love and admiration. His life reflected the glory and virtues of his mentor. However, this aspect of Mawlānā Madanī's life is not generally recognized as much as it should have been.[84]

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84 One may refer to *Asīrān-i Māltā* for details pertaining to this aspect of Mawlānā Madanī's life.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' mentioned that Mawlānā Madanī, no doubt, had differences with Mawlānā Thānawī, but this did not impair his love and respect for the latter; rather, he took him as his senior and mentor. Even at the height of the differences between the two, he told some teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, "I have not visited Thānā Bhawan for a long time, and my heart is filled with the desire to call on Mawlānā Thānawī." Accordingly, he and some teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, including Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān, proceeded to Thānā Bhawan. The train reached there late at night. By then the gate of Mawlānā Thānawī's sufi lodge had been closed. Aware of its protocols they did not bother anyone. Mawlānā Madanī was used to facing hardship, so they spent the night at the gate. Mawlānā Thānawī arrived the next morning before *fajr* and saw some people asleep at the gate. In the darkness he could not recognize them. The security guard was also clueless. Later, he discovered that his guests were Mawlānā Madanī and Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān. He was both pleased and surprised to see them. What hurt him was that they had had to spend the night at the gate. On enquiry, Mawlānā Madanī told him, "We are aware of your protocols. We know that the gate is closed at the appointed time." To this he replied, "Yes, it is the rule for the sufi lodge. However, you could have come to my house at any time, as the same protocols do not apply there." Mawlānā Madanī then explained that they did not want to disturb him at such a late hour. This is how they visited Thānā Bhawan. They returned after one or two days' stay.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' described it as an exemplary display of *taqwā*, simplicity and hospitality. Despite their differences both of them treated each other with spontaneous generosity and sincerity.

In *fiqh* parlance thin cotton socks with a leather covering are known as *raqīq muna'al*. Ḥanafī jurists have divided opinions

as to whether it is lawful to do *masḥ* (wiping) over these. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' held the view that wiping over them for *wuḍū'* is not lawful. He has adduced arguments for this viewpoint, which feature in *Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband*. However, Mawlānā Madanī regarded this practice as lawful. The two had discussions on this contentious issue several times; yet both adhered to their respective viewpoints.

One day Mawlānā Madanī informed Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' that he would visit Dār al-Iftā' for a detailed discussion. During his visit he consulted some books. Both presented their arguments and reservations to each other. This debate lasted for three days. Finally, Mawlānā Madanī said, "Your viewpoint is not without substance; however, I cannot reconcile myself to it. You do not endorse my position, so let us adhere to our respective viewpoints."

After this incident, Mawlānā Madanī visited Muftī Muḥammad Shafī''s brother-in-law, Mawlānā Ḥasan. Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' was also present on this occasion. Mawlānā Madanī was wearing those socks, and while doing *wuḍū'* for the *maghrib* prayer, he did *masḥ* over them and said, "O Muftī, this practice is not acceptable to you. Your prayer behind me would not be valid, so you had better lead the prayer." Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' did not decline, and proceeded to lead the prayer. After recounting this he remarked that Mawlānā Madanī and his other mentors had taught him the *adab* of disagreement.

When Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' wrote *Sīrat Khātim al-Anbiyā'* he presented a copy to Mawlānā Madanī. When the second edition of this work came out, he again sent a copy to him in Sylhet. On this latter occasion, Mawlānā Madanī replied,

> I have read the first edition word by word. As I found it highly accomplished, I have introduced it as a textbook. Soon there will be a meeting about Madrasahs in Kumrla. It will then be

prescribed as a textbook in all the Madrasahs of Bengal and Assam. You should endeavour to complete the remaining volumes quickly. As the works of Mawlānā Thānawī and other elders are available, it would be improper and inappropriate on our part to write anything.

The Conduct of the Great Scholars of Deoband

REGARDING THE EXCELLENT conduct of the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband it may be said, in summary, that they reflect the conduct and values of the early Muslims. Even volumes upon volumes of writings would be inadequate to describe at length their noble conduct and numerous virtues. Their way of life was in line with that of the Prophet's Companions ﷺ. This cannot be expressed in mere words, so let us recount some of the incidents of their worthy lives as a way of enabling us to clearly perceive their great virtue.

If knowledge is defined in terms of the breadth of one's study, or the ability to grasp an abundance of information, then there are many who possess such knowledge. However, the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband stand out for their utmost devotion to Allah and modesty, aside from their Abūndant knowledge. A modest person is like a tree laden with fruits and is thus of benefit to everyone; and the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband displayed this remarkable quality. Here are some instances that illustrate the point:

Ḥujjat al-Islām Mawlānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotawī, the founder of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, was a towering scholar, as is evident from his excellent books such as *Āb-i Ḥayāt, Taqrīr Dil Pazīr, Qāsim al-'Ulūm* and *Mubāhasa Shāh Jahānpūr.* Some of these may be difficult for even accomplished scholars to grasp. His contemporary, Mawlānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Nānotawī's[85] following remark was fairly popular in Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband in his day: "I have studied *Āb-i Ḥayāt* six times and am able to follow it in part now." *Hakīm al-Ummat* Mawlānā Thānawī said, "Even now I am unable to comprehend and benefit from Mawlānā Nānotawī's writings. I convince myself that as easy books are there for gaining requisite knowledge, there is no point in working hard over these."

Expert knowledge, especially of the rational sciences, often fills one's mind with arrogance. However, Mawlānā Nānotawī was modest enough to say, "I am ranked as both a sufi and a religious scholar, so I have to be doubly cautious. Had I not gained some religious knowledge, I would have been forgotten long ago." As remarked by Mawlānā Aḥmad Ḥasan Amrohawī,[86] if Mawlānā Qāsim noted some arrogance in a student, he asked him to carry

85 Mawlānā Ya'qūb Nānotawī was also referred to as *Ustādh al-Kul* ("Teacher of all"), and was the first *Sadr Mudarris* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and is considered one of its six founding fathers. He studied under his father, Mawlānā Mamlūk 'Alī Nānotawī, and completed his study of ḥadith under Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Mujaddidī. His students include Mawlānā Aḥmad Aḥsan Amrohawī, Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān 'Uthmānī, Shaykh al-Hind, Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī, Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Aḥmad and Mawlānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān 'Uthmānī. In terms of *taṣawwuf*, his Shaykh was Ḥājī Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī. His teachings can often be found in the discourses of Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī. He died in 1302/1884. For further biographical details one may refer to *Sirat-i Ya'qūb wa Mamlūk.*

86 Mawlānā Aḥmad Aḥsan Amrohawī was a distinguished student of Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī and was considered a repository of his knowledge. His most famous student is Mawlānā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Amrohawī. He was a *khalīfah* of Ḥājī Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī and Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī. He died in 1330/1912.

shoes; by the same token, he carried the shoes of a student characterised by modesty and simplicity.

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Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī was equally modest and simple. In recognition of his insights into *fiqh*, Mawlānā Nānotawī labelled him "*Abū Ḥanīfah-i 'Aṣr*" (today's Abū Ḥanīfah), and he thus became popularly known as such. Even *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, who did not rank *'Allāmah* Shāmī[87] highly, spoke very admiringly of Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad's genius. Mawlānā Thānawī reports, "Once, while Mawlānā Gangohī was teaching ḥadith, it started raining. As the students rushed inside with their books, the Mawlānā carried their shoes. It embarrassed everyone."

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Shaykh al-Hind Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan was an acclaimed scholar. Mawlānā Thānawī reports,

> Once, he went to Murādābād and the locals urged him to deliver a sermon. Although he excused himself, saying that he had no experience in this, they insisted. So he rose and recited this ḥadith, with its translation: "A knowledgeable devil overwhelms one thousand devout persons."[88] A leading scholar present there interrupted, saying, "It is an incorrect translation. One who cannot translate properly is not fit to deliver a sermon." Anyone in his place would have reacted very sharply to this provocative charge. However, he immediately took his seat, saying, "I had expressed earlier my inability to lecture. The people here did not listen to me. Now, on the basis of this evi-

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87 *'Allāmah* Muḥammad Amīn ibn 'Ābidīn ash-Shāmī is a famous Ḥanafī jurist. His books *'Uqūd Rasm al-Muftī* and *Radd al-Muḥtār* are taught to those who specialise in Ḥanafī jurisprudence. For further details, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

88 This ḥadith has been classified as extremely weak. However, it is true in meaning. One may refer to Munawī's *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, hadith no. 5896, for further details.

> dence, I am wholly justified in not speaking any further." After cutting short his sermon, he politely asked that scholar about his mistake so that he might avoid it in the future. He pointed out that the Arabic word used in that hadith did not convey the meaning described by him. Instantly he recited another hadith, with the same expression. This left him speechless.

The point that is being made here relates to the account included above on the exemplary devotion to Allah shown by Shaykh al-Hind when he ceased to continue speaking while affected by a sense of pride in his abilities.[89]

There is a famous report regarding ʿAlī ﷺ. As a Jew showed some disrespect to the Prophet ﷺ in his presence, he threw him to the ground. Unable to defend himself the Jew spat in his face. Immediately ʿAlī let him go. On being asked he said that he was about to punish the Jew out of his love for the Prophet ﷺ. However, if he had taken any action against him after the spitting incident, it would have betrayed his personal animus.

Shaykh al-Hind's incident (described previously) mirrored the spirit behind ʿAlī's self restraint. For he stopped speaking the moment he thought that it was aimed at displaying his knowledge. (This incident is described at length by Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ who had heard it from Mawlānā Thānawī. It is recorded in brief in Miyān Ṣāḥib's *Ḥayāt Shaykh al-Hind*, p. 67).

The account being referred to here appears above in relation to the qualities of extreme modesty and simplicity displayed by Shaykh al-Hind when he was unexpectedly visited at home by Mawlānā Mu'in ad-Dīn of the Madrasah Muʿīniyya in Ajmer. (This is mentioned by Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ, who had heard it from his classmate, Mawlānā Mughīth ad-Dīn. He had gone to Ajmer to study rational sciences after completing his education at

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89 See pp. 31–32 above.

Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Later, he migrated to Madīnah Ṭayyabah. Since he had heard it a long time ago, he got it re-confirmed from him in the holy mosque in Madīnah).

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'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī was a renowned scholar. Mawlānā Thānawī said in one of his sessions that according to a Christian philosopher one evidence of the truth of Islam is that it is regarded as a true faith by such a genius as al-Ghazzali. However, Mawlānā Thānawī contended that the very existence of *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī in our time confirms the truth of Islam; that such a great scholar should recognise Islam as a true faith, both professing and practising it."

Mawlānā Muḥammad Anwar says that during the trial against the Qādiānis in Bhāwalpūr *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī made an impressive presentation in which he said, "One who denies *tawātur*[90] (a mass-transmitted matter) in faith is an unbeliever." The Qādiāni spokesman contested it, pointing out, "In that case you should brand Imām ar-Rāzī an unbeliever, because *'Allāmah* Baḥr al-'Ulūm in his *Fawatiḥ ar-Raḥmah Sharḥ Musallam al-Thubūt*[91] states that Imām Rāzī dismisses *tawātur*." The whole body of *'ulamā'* were confounded by this retort, for none of them had a copy of that book. Mawlānā Anwar, who was present, reports, "We did not have that book. Mawlānā Murtaḍā did not have that book. Mawlānā 'Abd al-Laṭīf,[92] head of Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm,

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90 To gain a better understanding of the term "*tawātur*", one may refer to books dealing with the science of Ḥadith. Mawlānā Ẓafar Aḥmad 'Uthmānī's *Qawā'id fī 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* also provides an explanation of the term and a translation of it is to be published by Turath Publications.

91 For further details around this book, one may refer to *Ḥālāt-i Muṣannifīn-i Dars-i Niẓāmī*.

92 Mawlānā 'Abd al-Laṭīf Sahāranpūrī was appointed as the *Nāẓim-i A'la* or head administrator of Maẓāhir 'Ulūm in 1344/1925. Prior to that, whilst studying at the aforementioned Islamic seminary, he studied most of the books of Ḥadith under

and Mawlānā Murtaḍā did not know how to respond. However, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī came to our rescue, asserting: 'O Judge, please note that I had read that book thirty-two years ago. I no longer have a copy, but Imām ar-Rāzī, regarding a particular ḥadith, says that it has not attained the status of *tawātur*. He does not dismiss the concept of *tawātur*. My opponent has misquoted him. He should be asked to recite the passage under discussion. Otherwise, I should be allowed to take the book from him and read it out.' Accordingly, the Qādiāni witness read out the passage which confirmed *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī's version. It cast a spell on all those present. Then *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī said, "O Judge, he seeks to silence us. I am a student who studied only a few books, but I cannot be overwhelmed in argument."

It was a living testimony to his abundant knowledge and phenomenal memory that he accurately recalled the contents of a book that he had read thirty-two years previously. Another person in his place would have boasted much of both his knowledge and memory. However, his statement underscores his modesty. Notwithstanding all his accomplishments he did not consider himself more than a student. Thus he illustrated the truth embodied in this ḥadith, "O Allah, belittle me in my own eyes and exalt me in the eyes of others."[93]

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Mawlānā Anwar reports that once while *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was on his way to Kashmir, and waiting at Siālkot bus stand, a

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Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī and graduated in 1322/1904. He spent his life teaching and serving in the field of Islamic education. His students include Mawlānā Ẓafar Aḥmad 'Uthmānī, Mawlānā Idrīs Kāndhlawī, Mawlānā Badr 'Ālam Mīrathī, Mawlānā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Kāmilpūrī, Mawlānā As'ad Allāh Sahāranpūrī, Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Zakarīyya Kāndhlawī and Ḥaḍrat Jī Mawlānā Yūsuf Kāndhlawī. He died in 1373/1953. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband*.

93 See *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, Hadith no. 17412 and classified "Ḥasan" by Bazzār.

Christian priest approached him and said, "You look like a great Muslim scholar." When the former denied this, contending that he was only a student, the latter asked him whether he knew anything about Islam. To this he responded, "A little bit," and then proceeded to discuss the cross and adduced forty arguments for asserting Prophet Muhammad's advent: ten of these were from the Qur'ān, ten from the Torah, ten from the Gospel and ten premised on reason. Upon listening to all of this the priest said, "Were it not for the damage to my personal career, I would have accepted Islam. You have just taught me a great deal about my own faith."

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Both Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ and *Shaykh al-Hadith* Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī related that in 1321/1903 *ʿAllāmah* Kashmīrī had studied *ʿAllāmah* Ibn al-Humām's famous commentary on *al-Hidāyah* which is entitled *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*. He had written its abridgement up to The Book of Hajj; and had also started his rejoinder to Ibn Humām's objections against *al-Hidāyah*. Subsequently, for years he did not need to consult the actual text in order to be able to quote from it extensively in his lectures and in conversation. In 1347/1928 he told Mawlānā Binnorī, "In the last twenty-six years I have not consulted *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*. However, if I quote it now, you will find my rendition almost perfectly identical to the original."

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Mawlānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nuʿmānī[94] was *ʿAllāmah* Kashmīrī's student and he recounts,

Years after his lectures, I still used to ask him numerous ques-

94 Mawlānā Manzūr Nuʿmānī was known to be a thinker and engaged with various movements and organisations throughout his life, including the Tablīghī Jamāʿat. He was a disciple of Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Qādir Rāipūrī and learnt about the importance of *taṣawwuf* from him. His works particularly focused on denominational differences. He also wrote a famous commentary of ḥadith entitled *Maʿārif al-Ḥadīth*. He died in

> tions. Once, I quoted an extract from Tirmidhī's hadith collection and pointed to the difficulty I faced in grasping it despite my best efforts. He replied, "You may have forgotten this but I recall vividly that while teaching you this collection I had pointed out an error in its edition which goes largely unnoticed. Everyone should have faced the same difficulty." He then corrected the text. Glory be to Allah! He remembered something he had said as an aside during an old lecture!

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Mawlānā Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyab reports that he needed some details about Abū al-Ḥasan Kadhdhāb for inclusion in a book of his. He could not find any source. He relates,

> As usual I called on *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī. These were the last days of his life. He died only two or three weeks after our meeting. He had become very weak. I told him about my problem. Immediately he identified eight or ten sources. I told him that owing to my administrative responsibilities I could not even remember all of those titles, let alone go through them all for the sake such a small amount of information. I asked him to relate to me only three or four examples of Kadhdhāb's lying for me that I could quote in my book on his authority. With a smile on his face he started providing a detailed account of Abū al-Ḥasan Kadhdhāb and his habitual lying. He spoke at length about the last lie he had told before his death. It was amazing to listen to him because it seemed that he had read those books only the previous night, in light of the extensive chronological account he gave. In utter amazement I said, "You must have read some book on him recently." He simply replied, "No, forty years ago when I was in Egypt, I had read a book on the subject

1417/1996. For further biographical details one may refer to *Nuqūsh-i Raftagān* and *Sawāniḥ-i Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā 'Abd al-Qādir Rāipūrī.*

> in the Khedev Library. What I read then has remained with me. Your query merely jogged my memory."

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Mawlānā Qārī Ṭayyab also relates,

> During the Khilafat Movement period when the issue of appointing a public Qāḍī arose, Mawlawī Ṣubḥān Allāh Khān Gorakhpūrī quoted some classical writings which endorsed his own viewpoint, which contradicted the majority stance. He presented his position at a gathering of *'ulamā'* in Deoband, who were left perplexed because they could neither refute nor accept the evidences. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was absent doing *wuḍū'* at the time, but when he returned, the *'ulamā'* brought the problem to his attention and confessed their inability to resolve it. After studying the text he pronounced that the quotation had been tampered with. When the original book from the library was consulted, his assertion was found to be true. To everyone's relief, the original source was in line with the majority position.

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Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnorī reports, "There arose a controversy among the *'ulamā'* of Kashmir regarding a divorce case. Both the parties appointed *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī as the arbitrator. He listened to their arguments. One party's stance was based on a quotation from *Fatāwā 'Imādīyya*. He remarked, 'I have gone through the authentic manuscript of *Fatāwā 'Imādīyya* in the Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband Library, and it does not contain this particular passage. The copy has either been tampered with, or they are making an attempt at deception.'" Someone with such a phenomenal memory is justified in making claims to some extent. However, *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was a modest, devout person who acted for the sake of Allah. When he asked Mawlānā Binnorī to write down his judgement in the above case, the latter applied various honorific

titles to him. On seeing this he erased them with his own hand and told him tersely, "Mawlānā Muḥammad Anwar Shāh will do."

Though he spent almost his entire life reading books, he used to say, "I do not make books subservient to me; rather, I only study whilst in a state of subservience to the book." Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyab stated, "We never saw him reading a book in a lying or reclining posture; rather, he handled books with respect, as if he were studying at the feet of his mentor." *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī is on record as saying, "Since I attained the age of maturity, I have never read any book on religion without being in a state of *wudu*."

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Part of the popular history of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband is that two scholars named Maḥmūd laid the foundation of the Dār al-'Ulūm. Both of them were natives of Deoband: one of them was the teacher, *Mullā* Maḥmūd, and the other his student who later came to be known as Shaykh al-Hind Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan. Mawlānā Muḥammad Yāsīn (the father of Muftī Muḥammad Shafī') reports,

> Once *Mullā* Maḥmūd said that most of the annotations on *Sunan Ibn Mājah* attributed to Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Muḥaddith Dehlawī are actually by him. In view of his simple way of life the listeners had difficulty in accepting this. This devout individual made no show whatsoever of his learning; one would never have imagined him to be a scholar.

He used to go to the market to buy groceries and led life as an ordinary, simple person. However, he was a great scholar in his own right. Mawlānā Muḥammad Yāsīn had not studied a major work on the principles of *fiqh*, and he was keen on studying it before his enrolment in the specialist hadith course. When he requested *Mullā* Maḥmūd to teach it, the latter pointed out that he did not have any spare time, but that he could accompany him when he

went to market to buy groceries and study it with him on the way. It was a complex and large textbook, which other *'ulamā'* could only teach after making detailed preparations. However, *Mullā* Maḥmūd faced no difficulty in teaching it at the butcher's and the grocer's shops.

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Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī's exalted status as a scholar is widely acclaimed. Even in his student days he stood out for his intellectual abilities, wit and excellent conduct. In 1300/1882 he graduated from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband and a grand ceremony was planned for conferring degrees upon the graduates. On learning of this he met Mawlānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Nānotawī, along with some of his classmates, and told him, "We have heard about our graduation ceremony, but we are not worthy of any degree. This programme should be cancelled, otherwise our Madrasah will stand discredited for having awarded degrees to undeserving persons such as us." This infuriated Mawlānā Ya'qūb who replied, "You are absolutely wrong! You may not value yourselves in the presence of your teachers, which is fine. However, as and when you go out, you should realise your worth; you will make a mark wherever you go."

Their Humility & Kindness to Others

Mawlānā Muzaffar Ḥusain Kāndhlawī[95] ranks among the leading *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was a student of Shāh Muḥammad Isḥāq[96] and a classmate of Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Muḥaddith Dehlawī.[97] Once, while he was going somewhere, he

95 Mawlānā Muzaffar Ḥusain Kāndhlawī was a student in ḥadith of Shāh Muḥammad Isḥāq Dehlawī and received *khilāfah* in the Naqshbandi order by the latter's brother, Shāh Muāammad Ya'qūb Dehlawī. He also had a phenomenal influence on the *'ulāma* of Deoband, in particular on Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī. He died in 1283/1866. For further details, one may refer to Muḥammad Asad Thānawī's PhD thesis entitled *Mawlānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotawī kī Dīnī wa 'Ilmī Khidmāt Kā Mutāla'ah*.

96 Shāh Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad Afḍal Dehlawī was the main student of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawī and was considered to like his child. He became his successor and inherited his books. His students include Mawlānā Muzaffar Ḥusain KāndhLAwī, Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī, Nawāb Quṭb ad-Dīn Khān, Shaykh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Pānīpatī and Shaykh 'Abd al-Qayyūm Burhānawī. He died in 1262/1846. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*.

97 Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Mujaddidī was from the lineage of Mujaddid Alf-i Thanī Imam Sirhindī. He is the main teacher of ḥadith for the leading founding fathers of Deoband. He was also a Sufi Shaykh in the Naqshbandi order and his senior

saw an old man carrying a heavy load. He took it from him and delivered it to his house. On the way that old man asked him about his home town. When he mentioned Kāndhlā, the old man exclaimed, "*Mawlawī* Muzaffar Ḥusain, a great *walī*, lives there", and he proceeded to speak of him in glowing terms. The Mawlānā, however, contradicted him, pointing out that there was nothing so special about him. At most, he said, he offers the prayers. The old man resented this criticism of the *walī*. Meanwhile, an acquaintance of the Mawlānā appeared and introduced the old man to him; the old man started to cry and hugged the Mawlānā.

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Mawlānā Muzaffar Ḥusain used to come out of mosque in the early morning after the prayer and he would then visit the houses of his relatives and bring their groceries to them. Since cash purchases were not very common then in that small town, he carried their grain to the market and brought them their daily needs in exchange.

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Allah had blessed the *'Ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband with illumined faces that reflected their sincerity. People were known to have accepted Islam just at the sight of them. Mawlānā Muḥammad Anwar reports that an unusual event occurred when he was on a journey in Muzaffar Garh. *'Allāmah* Kashmīrī was waiting for a train along with his disciples at Multan railway station. A little before the *fajr* prayer, a Hindu railway official with a lamp in hand was approaching him and, on seeing the *'Allāmah*'s radiant face, stopped and began to cry; shortly after this chance encounter he accepted Islam. This man would say, "The radiant face of this scholar convinced me that Islam is the true religion."

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disciples include Mawlana Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn. He died in 1296/1875. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawātir*.

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Common to all the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was their devotion both to Allah and to knowledge. Furthermore, they were distinguished by their devoutness and noble conduct; for them, academic knowledge was of no value without these praiseworthy traits of character. When Mawlānā Thānawī established Madrasah Imdādīyya at Thānā Bhawan, he affirmed to Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī the fundamental premise that knowledge be accompanied by laudable character. To this Mawlānā Gangohī replied, "It is good. However, I will be really pleased when devout people also assemble there."

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One of the main features of the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was their devotion to Allah. Mawlānā Muḥammad Yāsīn said, "I was a witness to that grand era of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, when everyone associated with it—ranging from the principal, to the teachers, officers, attendants and gatekeepers—were no less than *awliyā*. In the daytime it served as a religious education institution and at night it was the sufi lodge of *awliyā*. One could hear the Qur'an recitation and invocations from the rooms. This was the outstanding feature of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband."

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Although Mawlānā Rafī' ad-Dīn,[98] the Chancellor of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, was not a religious scholar in a formal sense,

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98 Mawlānā Rafī' ad-Dīn was the second *Muhtamim* in the history of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. He was appointed upon the insistence of Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī, even though he tried to excuse himself as a result of not receiving a formal religious education. Nevertheless, Mawlānā Nānotawī felt his appointment was according to the decree of Allah. He was a senior *khalīfah* of Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Mujaddidī and his disciples include the first chief Muftī of the Dār al-'Ulūm, Muftī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān 'Usmānī. He died in 1308/1890 and was buried in Jannat al-Baqī', Madīnah Munawwarah. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Akābir-i 'Ulāma-i Deoband* and *Dār al-'Ulūm Kī 50 Mithālī Shakhsīyyāt.*

he was a *murīd* of Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Muḥaddith Dehlawī. Mawlānā Nānotawī remarked about him, "The only difference between Mawlānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn and Mawlānā Gangohī is that the former is not a religious scholar; however, both are spiritual masters of the same stature."

Mawlānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn had a cow that was in the charge of his servant. Once, by chance, his servant tied the cow in the courtyard of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. Upon spotting this, one of the locals asked the Mawlānā, "Is this courtyard for raising your cattle?" Instead of offering any clarification, he donated the cow to the Dār al-ʿUlūm. This ended the matter once and for all. He could quite easily have justified himself, but these *ʿulamā'* of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband were selfless souls who did not seek to defend themselves.

Shaykh al-Hind, despite his preoccupation with teaching and other academic works, used to wake up at 2am, whereby he offered *nafl* prayers and engaged himself in the remembrance of Allah until the *fajr* prayer. During Ramadan he remained awake throughout the night. *Tarāwīḥ* prayers at his place continued up to *suḥūr* time, while several *ḥuffāẓ* recited from the Qur'an. At times, his feet were swollen on account of standing for hours in *tarāwīḥ* prayer. Thus he achieved emulating the Prophet's glorious example.

Once he turned very weak owing to lack of sleep and food and standing for hours. Yet he did not give up the *tarāwīḥ* prayers. In desperation his wife and other women of the family requested the *tarāwīḥ* Imām, *Mawlawī* Kifāyat Allāh,[99] to recite a small part

99 Muftī Kifāyat Allāh Dehlawī was a leading student of Shaykh al-Hind. He was a political activist and worked alongside Mawlānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī. He was the first head of Jamīʿat-i ʿUlamā'-i Hind. Yet, he is more famously known for his expertise in *fiqh*; hence he was known as "*Muftī-i Aʿzam*" or "Grand Muftī" of India in his time. His *fatwas* have been published in a number of volumes and has been

that night and to tell Shaykh al-Hind that it was on account of his own fatigue and lack of motivation. Since he was very concerned about the comfort and welfare of others, he readily granted the *Mawlawī*'s request. When *tarāwīḥ* was over, the *Mawlawī* lay on a bed outside while Shaykh al-Hind went inside his house. A little later, however, the *Mawlawī* noticed that someone was massaging his feet; and awoke to find it was Shaykh al-Hind. This greatly embarrassed the *Mawlawī*; yet, when he insisted on returning the gesture, he was rebuffed and told that he needed this relief on account of his fatigue.

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'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī is widely acclaimed for his astounding scholarship and for his phenomenal memory. However, these qualities of his are eclipsed by his other features. He was an exceptionally devout man who was committed, heart and soul, to Allah. He himself reported this to Mawlānā Manẓūr Nu'mānī:

> Once I was coming from Kashmir and on the way I met a *murīd* of a famous spiritual master of Punjab. He strongly encouraged me to call upon the master. As it was on my way, I agreed. The master received me warmly and we conversed. He then turned his attention to his *murīds*, as a result of which they were literally spellbound. I witnessed all this and told him, "Please turn your attention to me so that I may also experience all of this." He commenced his exercise of mind control over me, whereas I sought protection in Allah's name. Despite his best efforts he could not get any success in possessing me. After some time he told me, "You cannot be brought under any spell." I told him, "All of this is nothing but a gimmick to impress people. These tricks have nothing to do with devotion to Allah. If one strives

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named *Kifāyat al-Muftī*. His most popular book is the legal primer *Ta'līm al-Islām*, which has often been taught in supplementary Islamic schools. He died in 1372/1952.

one can develop this ability within three days and one may hear the sound of 'Allah, Allah' from the heart. What really matters is the state of God consciousness, one's adherence to the Shari'ah and constancy in following the Sunnah."

Their Tactfulness & Understanding

Allah blessed the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband with the desire to propagate and promote Islam; He also enabled them to discharge this duty tactfully and in a pleasing manner. We have already spoken of Mawlānā Muzaffar Ḥusain. He passed through Jalālābād or Shāmlī during a journey and he came across a desolate mosque. He performed *wuḍū'* there, cleaned the mosque and asked if there was anyone else to offer the prayer. He was told that a Khān Ṣāḥib lived in a house facing the mosque and if he were persuaded to pray, then some more local people would join in. However, he was informed that the man was a drunkard who spent his time with prostitutes. Upon hearing this, the Mawlānā called on him, but he was then in a drunken state and a girl sat beside him. He said, "Khān Ṣāḥib, if you offer the prayers it would encourage others to do so, and this will restore the life and glory of the mosque." He replied, "I cannot do *wuḍū'*. Moreover, I cannot give up these two vices to which I am addicted." To this he responded, "You may offer prayer without *wuḍū'*. If you cannot

give up drinking, you may continue to drink." Accordingly he promised to pray without *wuḍū'*.

The Mawlānā left the place and at some distance offered the prayer. He cried profusely during prostration. Someone remarked, "Today you did two things which you had not committed earlier. Firstly, you gave permission for drinking and fornication. Secondly, you wept abundantly in prostration." He replied, "While prostrating before Allah I fervently beseeched Allah that I had brought the person as far as I could and that it was now up to Him to change his heart."

As the girl left the man, it was time for the *ẓuhr* prayer, and he remembered his promise. He thought that since he was going to pray for the first time he should take a bath and he may then continue without *wuḍū'* in the future. Accordingly, he took a bath, put on clean clothes and offered the prayer, after which he went for a walk in a garden. Since he was in the state of *wuḍū'* he offered the *'aṣr* and *maghrib* prayers there as well. When he returned from the garden, a girl was waiting for him. However, he first went into his house in order to eat. When his eyes fell on his wife, he found her attractive. He therefore dismissed the girl who was waiting, telling her never to come to his house again.

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Amīr Shāh Khān[100] reports that Mawlānā Nānotawī worked in Munshī Mumtāz 'Alī's press in Meerut. A *Ḥāfiẓ* also worked there, but he was a non-practising Muslim who did not offer the prayers. Yet, he was very close to Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī, which made some of the Mawlānā's friends unhappy. Nevertheless, the Mawlānā overlooked his lapses for a time.

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100 Ḥājī Amīr Shāh Khān was a special servant of Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī. He was particularly known for his knowledge of *'ilm al-kalām*, which was a field that Mawlānā Nānotawī had mastered. His knowledge was so vast in this field that even the likes of *'Allāmah* Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and *'Allāmah* Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī referred to him. One may refer to *Khuṭbāt-i Akābir* and *Fatḥ al-Mulhim* for further details.

Then, one Friday the Mawlānā told him, "We are friends, so it is unseemly if we follow different ways of life. Let me take on yours. I promise I will not change." Upon hearing this, he cried and exclaimed, "How can it be? I will follow your way." From then onwards he led the life of a highly devout person.

*

Mawlānā Rafīʿ ad-Dīn, whilst in charge of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, noted that some teachers reported late for class. Far from taking any disciplinary action, he made it a point to sit at the gate of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband at its opening hour. As teachers arrived, he enquired about their well being and greeted and shook hands with them. He did not chastise them or ask them to explain their late arrival. His tactful handling sent a positive message and everyone became punctual. One teacher, however, persisted in arriving late. One day when he came quite late, after greeting him the Mawlānā told him, "I know you are a very busy person. As a result, you arrive late. Since your time is valuable and I do not have any work to do, let me do your domestic work. That should enable you to get to your teaching assignment here on time." This had its desired effect and he, too, turned into a punctual teacher.

*

Allah blessed Mawlānā Thānawī with the remarkable ability to reform people tactfully. To illustrate this point, there is an incident involving the leading Urdu poet Jigar Murādābādī. Once Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Ḥasan Majdhūb mentioned to Mawlānā Thānawī that Jigar desired to visit Thānā Bhawan. However, his inability to desist from drinking alcohol prevented him from coming. When the Mawlānā asked him what reply he had given to Jigar, he told him, "I agreed with him that it is improper to call on any *walī* in this state." The Mawlānā told him, "O Khwājah, I thought you were trained well. Now I realize that I was wrong in my assumption." He then added, to the great surprise of Khwājah,

"You should have asked him to visit me immediately, for such a visit could have assisted him in ridding himself of his addiction."

*

On his return Khwājah related all this to Jigar. Upon hearing this he took to crying and exclaimed, "I will never touch this filth again as long as I live." No sooner had he given it up than he fell ill, and his condition turned critical. Someone told him that even the Sharī'ah lets you drink a little in this exceptional condition. However, such was his resolve that he did not touch alcohol again. Allah helps those who are firm in their resolve, so with Allah's help he recovered within a few days. Then he visited Thānā Bhawan and Mawlānā Thānawī received him warmly.

*

During a lecture at a college in Shimla, I believe, Mawlānā Thānawī pointed out that both its syllabus and its irreligious ethos sows doubts about religion in the minds of the young. As a result, the younger generation has moved away from the religion. Now the remedy, he stated, is that young students should spend time in the company of the devout, and such *awliyā* may be found in every town.

Someone asked him, "Is it true that you hate those who study English?" He replied, "No, not all! We do, however, dislike some of their actions and sayings, which run contrary to the Sharī'ah." On being asked to specify these actions and sayings the Mawlānā replied, "Different people are guilty of such actions and sayings." The person then pointedly asked, "Is there anything wrong with me?" Like almost any student of today he did not have a beard. The Mawlānā replied, "Some of these are quite evident. Modesty prevents me from specifying these in public. I do not know you, so I cannot give my opinion."

The Mawlānā returned to Thānā Bhawan after the lecture. During the college vacation a student sent him a letter, stating

that he wanted to spend some time in his company during the holidays, but mentioned his fear that his appearance was not in line with the Shari'ah, and that neither his speech nor his behaviour were up to scratch. He asked whether he could still call on the Mawlānā in that state. The Mawlānā directed him to visit Thānā Bhawan, even in that state. When he arrived he told the Mawlānā, "I have many doubts and reservations, which I need to resolve." The Mawlānā reassured him and advised him to write down of all his various issues saying, "You should only listen to our discussions and not raise any questions for the time being. Three days before you are due to leave, remind me of your questions and I will respond. In the meantime you should delete any questions to which you find answers before then." He followed this advice. When the Mawlānā asked him before his departure about his questions, he replied that many of these had already been resolved. He then asked one or two more questions and on getting them satisfactorily answered, he left satisfied.

Their Attitude Toward Adversaries

ANOTHER NOBLE TRAIT of the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was that they appropriately engaged with their adversaries: while refuting them they did not use any offensive language, nor did they apply any derogatory names. Even in response to provocation they tried to act with self-restraint and gave sincere advice to their detractors.

Amīr Shāh Khan reports that Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotawī once visited Khurja. In a gathering there someone mentioned *Mawlawī* Faḍl-i Rasūl Badāyūnī.[101] Since he belonged to a group of adversaries, Amīr Khān twisted his name by saying Faṣl-i Rasūl [the one who has departed from the Messenger]. Angrily, the Mawlānā asked me, "What do people call him?" So the correct pronuncia-

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101 Mawlānā Faḍl-i Rasūl Badāyūnī was an Indian scholar of the 13th century of Islam. He had graduated from Lucknow and took ḥadith from the Arabian Peninsula and Baghdad. He wrote polemical works and engaged in much debate. He even gave a fatwa excommunicating Shāh Ismā'īl Dehlawī and was disparaging of other mainstream *'ulāma'* before him. He died in 1289/1872. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*.

tion of the name was given, upon which he rebuked Amīr Khān and said, "Why do you say Faṣl-i Rasūl, then?" While commenting on this incident, Mawlānā Thānawī remarked, "They followed the Qur'ānic directive of not using offensive nicknames for anyone, not even an enemy."

*

It is well-known that *Mawlawī* Aḥmad Razā Khān of Bareilly launched into an abusive tirade against the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, branding them disbelievers. He spared no opportunity to hurl abuse at these noble, devoted men of knowledge aiming at Mawlānā Gangohī as his main target of attack. One day, the Mawlānā asked his follower, Mawlānā Muḥammad Yaḥyā Kāndhlawī, to read out *Mawlawī* Barelwī's writings to him. He replied, "These consist only of abuses." To this the Mawlānā responded, "Distant words of abuse do not affect me. Read out his writings to me. Let me listen to his arguments, there may be some substance in them that could make a difference to my position." Being a seeker of truth he studied the writings of his adversaries with a view to improving his own understanding.

*

Mawlānā Maḥmūd Rāmpūrī reports, "Once a Hindu and I went to a court in Deoband. Shaykh al-Hind hosted me while the Hindu went to his relatives. He returned after taking dinner there, and stayed with me at night. He was given a bed to sleep in. At night, while everyone was asleep, I kept an eye on the Mawlānā so that if he took up any hard work I could get up and help him. I then saw him massaging the feet of the Hindu who was sleeping soundly. After a while I got up and told him that I would take over. However, he told me that he was his guest and only he would serve him. I had to remain quiet while he busied himself helping his guest."

*

Mawlānā Aḥmad Ḥasan Panjābī, a madrasah teacher of Kanpur,

wrote an extensive tract entitled *Ibṭāl Imkān-i Kadhib*, in which he branded Mawlānā Isma'īl Shahīd[102] and his followers as people who had gone astray. He included them among a misguided group of Muʿtazilah.[103] The introduction to this tract crossed all the limits of civility in wantonly abusing those *'ulamā'*. On going through it, Shaykh al-Hind was enraged. However, being gifted with knowledge, sincerity and self-control he said, "If I abuse them, it will not compensate for their disrespect to the elders. If I vent my anger by abusing their mentors, it will be pointless, for they are innocent and have nothing to do with this sacrilege."

*

It goes without saying that Mawlānā Thānawī's sermons, in both their oral and written forms, have benefited the Muslim community immensely. These have been a source of guidance to this day. They cover most of the aspects of faith and have had a transformative effect on their audiences.

He once had a lecture scheduled in Jaunpūr. A large crowd of Barelwis turned up to the lecture. He was given a note which stated: "You are a weaver. You are an ignorant person. You are a disbeliever. You should be careful about what you say in your lecture."

Before beginning his lecture, Mawlānā Thānawī read out the contents of the note to the audience, and then said:

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102 Shāh Isma'īl ibn 'Abd al-Ghanī Dehlawī was a leading student of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dehlawī. He was referred to by his teacher as *Hujjat al-Islām*. He wrote books emphasising the importance of *tawḥīd* or monotheism and purifying one's creed and worship. He tirelessly engaged in raising the banner of Islam by participating in the group of his Sufi Shaykh, Sayyid Aḥmad. In the end, he was assassinated in Bālākot in 1246/1830. For further biographical details, one may refer to *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir* and *Tārīkh-i Da'wat wa 'Azīmat*.

103 The Muʿtazilah are referred to as the rationalists. They became prevalent in the third century of Islam. For further details around this denomination, one may refer to *Tārīkh-i Da'wat wa 'Azīmat*.

As to the assertion about my being a weaver, there is nothing wrong with that. I am not here to negotiate a matrimonial alliance. I have merely travelled here in order to convey Allah's guidance. This has nothing to do with my profession. Moreover, this is not something that one determines by choice: Allah decides the circumstances of one's birth and class however He wills. All people are created by Him, and if their conduct is sincere, they will do well. This is my reply in principle. As to the truth of it, there is hardly any need to state it in the light of the above clarification. However, for anyone who is very keen on finding out about my family tree, I leave behind here the names and addresses of some of the leading people of Jaunpur. They will inform you as to whether or not I am a weaver. However, let me clarify here and now that I am not a weaver.

As to the next assertion that I am an ignorant person, I readily affirm this. Rather, I am the most ignorant person of all. However, I will keep on quoting what I have heard from my elders and what I have learnt from books. If anyone is in doubt about anything which I convey, they need not follow it.

As far as the charge of being a disbeliever, I do not have to say much. I recite publicly before all of you: 'I testify that there is no god besides Allah; and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Had I been, God forbid, a disbeliever before this moment, in view of my testimony I am no longer such.

Finally, I am asked to be careful in what I say. Let me tell you that delivering sermons is not my profession. I say only what I know. Also, I only deliver such sermons when people insist that I should lecture. If you prefer, I will not even say a word. As to the advice about being careful, I do not provoke anyone. Never do I intentionally say anything which may offend or cause discord. However, if I have to mention something that refutes innovative practices while elucidating the principles of

> the Shari'ah, I feel no need to hesitate in this regard. Otherwise it would be tantamount to being dishonest in matters of belief. Now, let me know your decision in the light of the above. If during my sermon I say anything that may offend anyone, I should be stopped immediately, and I promise that on receiving any indication to do so, I will stop and retire to my seat. In fact, it would be better still if the author of the note were to stop me. If he cannot gather the courage to do so, he should ask someone else to do it.

Upon hearing all of this, a *Mawlawī* who himself subscribed to the adversaries' viewpoint, and was an influential person in the locality, roared, "Some wicked person must have written that note. Go ahead with your sermon! Are you not a *Fārūqī* [a descendant of Caliph 'Umar Fārūq ﷺ]?" To this the Mawlānā replied, "I am *Fārūqī* yet the people of this place call us weavers."

When the entire audience in the mosque, especially the aforementioned *Mawlawī*, took to condemning the sender of that note, the Mawlānā dissuaded him from uttering profanities in view of the sanctity of the location. Eventually, he delivered his sermon, which was a huge success. Unintentionally, during that lecture, he mentioned something about innovations in belief. Although he had granted people the permission to stop him from saying anything further, no one could muster the courage to disrupt his lecture.

A rationalist *Mawlawī* initially praised the Mawlānā's lecture, repeatedly exclaiming, "*ṣubḥān Allāh*", while the lecture covered sufism. However, as the Mawlānā took up the refutation of innovations in belief, he became quiet and listened patiently, which was by Allah's special favour, because he was in the habit of disturbing public lectures which were not to his liking. However, when the lecture was over and everyone was about to disperse, he asked

the Mawlānā, "Why did you take up these issues of innovation?" At this point a *Mawlawī* of the opposing school tried to vindicate the Mawlānā. However, the Mawlānā said, "He has addressed me, so let me respond to him. You need not interfere." Then he turned to the questioner, telling him, "Had you cautioned me earlier, I would have been more careful. I discussed only what I considered to be important. The only way to resolve it, since the audience is still here, is that you announce that I should not have discussed those issues. I will not contest it. This will vindicate your position." Upon hearing this everyone laughed and the *Mawlawī* went away. After he had left, people took to criticising him, but when this became excessive, the Mawlānā intervened, "Do not abandon the resident *'ulamā'* in favour of a travelling one. I am leaving today for Machhlīshahr. I urge the person who sent me the note to refute my stance. People will then be free to opt for his viewpoint or mine. This is the best way to put an end to this mischief." Then the other adversary present there declared, "Brothers, you know that I practise innovations in matters of belief. However, the truth is that Mawlānā Thānawī's stance, which he presented just now, is correct."

*

It is hoped that the selection of accounts given here are sufficient to provide a glimpse of the excellent conduct of the *'ulamā'* of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. Of course, there exists a great deal more material that could have been included, and the task of collecting and publishing the entirety of what has been found remains to be done. Needless to say, the future accomplishment of such a great service to the cause of Islam and knowledge is by the will of Allah alone.

All praise be to Allah, both at the beginning and in the end.

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The Great Scholars of the Deoband Islamic Seminary is a highly inspirational glimpse into the lives and works of some of the luminaries affiliated to Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, aptly renowned as the Azhar of the East. It is a translation of two Urdu articles authored by Muftī Taqi Usmani, which were later jointly published under the title *Akabire Deoband kia the*. The first article is essentially a recollection of an array of profound stories, teachings and personal interactions, which Muftī Taqi Usmani's illustrious father, Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ Usmani, would often relate with great fondness regarding his teachers and elders whom he benefited from. The second article, again a collection of stories and sayings, highlights the salient features of those who hailed from the rich tradition of the Deoband seminary.

Essentially, this book epitomises the essence and spirit of the Deoband seminary, and provides an invaluable insight into the character, legacy and methodology of its great masters.

A beneficial and spiritually motivating collection of illustrative incidents from the lives of some of the greatest Subcontinent Scholars of the recent past, penned by one of the greatest living scholars. A must-read for scholars, students and laypeople alike.

—MUHAMMAD IBN ADAM AL-KAWTHARI (www.DarulIftaa.com)

MUFTĪ TAQI USMANI is one of the leading contemporary scholars of today. After studying at Darul Uloom Karachi, Pakistan, the renowned institute established by his late father, Muftī Shafīʿ Usmani, he has been teaching at the same institute over the last four decades and currently teaches *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Alongside his expertise in Islamic Law, Economics and Hadith, he has authored over forty books in Arabic, Urdu and English on various topics.

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